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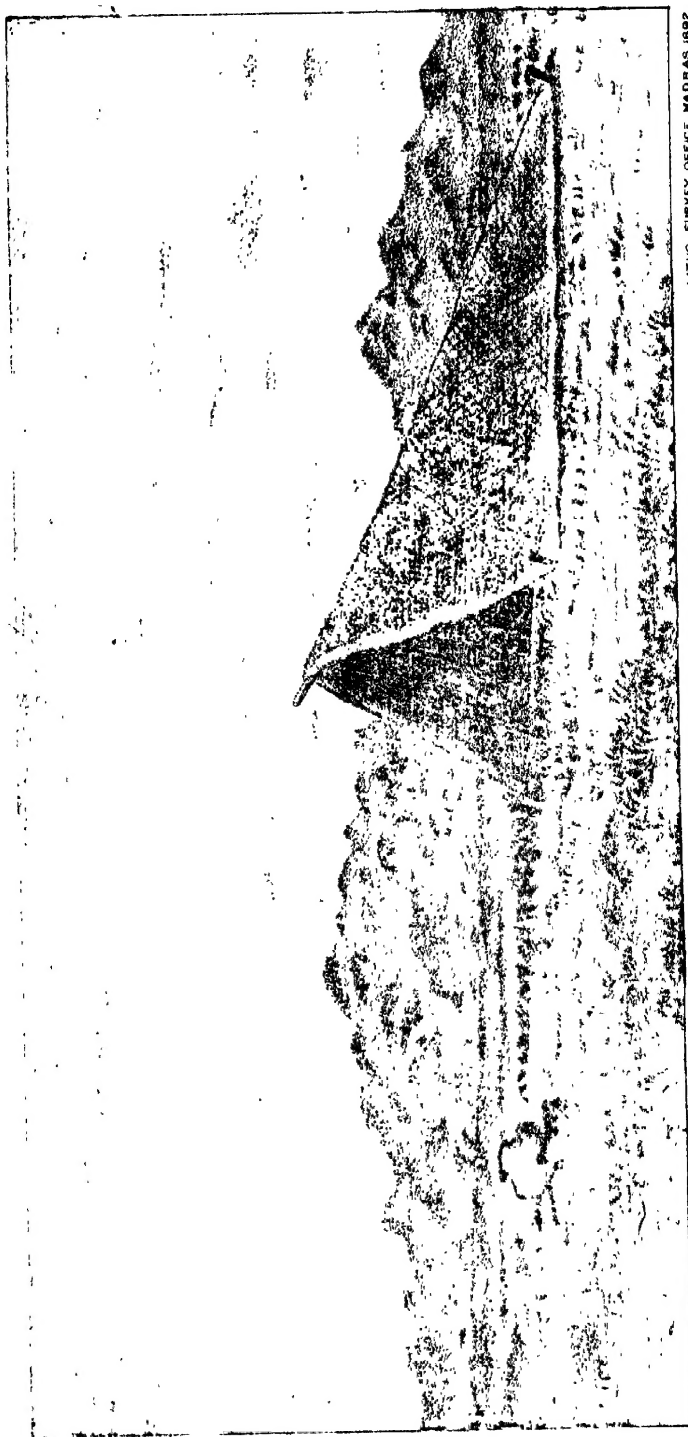
NOTES ON CRIMINAL CLASSES OF-  
THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY.







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# NOTES ON CRIMINAL CLASSES

OF THE

## MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THESE notes on the habits and customs of some of the criminal classes of the Madras Presidency have been collected at the suggestion of Colonel Porteous, Inspector-General of Police, and put in the present form in the hope that they may prove of some value to Police officers who are continually brought in contact with the predatory classes, and of some slight interest to such of the public who may wish to know something regarding the doings of their less favoured brethren.

The compilation of the notes has necessitated much time and labour being expended, and I am painfully conscious that the subject has been only partially dealt with; the facts given have, for the most part, been verified by personal association with the people themselves, and it is believed they will be found accurate: it has been a difficult task to induce the people to gratify curiosity when questioned as to their caste customs; this, however, may possibly be accounted for by their being themselves ignorant of their own folk-lore.

Much valuable information has been obtained from Dr. Sherring's "Hindu Tribes and Castes;" the Abbé Dubois' "People of India;" Mr. Nelson's "Madura Country," and from the various District

**Manuals.** My best thanks are due to Mr. E. S. B. Stevenson, District Superintendent of Police, for his cordial assistance in the work in placing at my disposal valuable notes of inquiries made by him from time to time, and also to Mr. Clogstoun, Assistant Superintendent of Police, for sketches of the encampments of Koravars, Joghies, and Domaras, which have enabled me to illustrate faithfully the peculiar habitations of these people.

FORT SAINT GEORGE, MADRAS,  
*January 1892.*

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# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Alaguries—Capemaries—Origin of class—Division of class—Head-quarters and places frequented—Headman, the Golla Chetti—Similarity with Soonariahs and Poona Bhampta—Mode of committing crime, disguises—Railway thieves—The 'respectable native gentleman'—Language—Domestic habits—Receivers ...	1-7

---

## CHAPTER II.

Alaguries <i>continued</i> —Donga Dasaries, Gudu Dasaries, Padaya-chies—Disguises adopted—Headman—Head-quarters—Method of committing burglaries, implements used—Language—Battu-rajahs or Battu Turakas—Omens ... ..	8-13
--	------

---

## CHAPTER III.

Joghies—Derivation of word—Division of class—Districts frequented—Headmen—Habitations and encampments—Betrothal and marriage ceremonies—Readmission to caste after conviction—Language—Meetings held before committing crime—Identification ... ..	14-20
--	-------

---

## CHAPTER IV.

Yanadies—Caste tradition—Division of class—Reddy Yanadies—Wild, or Adavi Yanadies—Challa Yanadies—Language—Nakkala Vandlu, or jackal eaters—Crimes committed by Yanadies—Means of obtaining information—Encampments—Betrothal and marriage ceremonies—Implement used in the commission of burglary ... ..	21-27
---	-------



## CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
Lumbádies—Sugalies—Legend regarding origin—Division of class—Head of clans—Language—Means of identification—Costume worn—Habitations—Crimes committed—Omens looked for before commission of crime—Receivers—Betrothal and marriage customs—Office of Priest or Bhat—Musicians—Story of a series of dacoities committed by Lumbádies ...	28-45

## CHAPTER VI.

Koravars—Korachas—Erukals—Derivation of term—Division and sub-division of class—Origin of names of clans—Language—Habitations and encampments—The salt merchants of olden times—Headmen—Omens—Mode of committing dacoity—Proving alibis—Connectionship between various gangs—As house-breakers—Division of stolen property—Confessions—Occupation of the aged—Trial by ordeal—Causes of quarrels—Stolen property—Identification—Customs regarding the sexes—Marriage ceremonies—Widow remarriage—Inheritance—Funeral ceremonies—Kavilgar (or Kavalkara) Koravars—Language—Black mail—Crimes committed—Disposal of spoil—Settlements at Gudiyátam and Tirutani ... ..	46-66
--	-------

## CHAPTER VII.

Koravars <i>continued</i> —Ena or Thogamalai Koravars—Connection with Capemari Alaguries—Original head-quarters and present settlements—Crimes committed—Language—Slang terms used—Receivers of stolen property—Marriages and other customs—Headman—Deities worshipped—Demonologists—Pile-curing class ... ..	67-69
---	-------

## CHAPTER VIII.

Domaras (Dombari—Domber)—Origin of term—Profession—Division of class—Aray Domara language—Type of countenance—Head of tribe—Legend regarding origin of headman—Reddi Domara—Language—Habitations—Rank in social scale—Identification—Crimes committed—Implement used in burglary—Stolen property—Betrothal and marriage ceremonies—Infant marriage—Caste disputes—Treatment of women—Demonologists ... ..	70-77
---	-------

## CHAPTER IX.

	PAGE
Wudders (Woddevandlu—Oddan), a labouring tribe of Telugu origin—Division of class—Contract workers—Donga Wuddiars or thieving Wudders—Crimes addicted to—Mode of committing burglary—Confessions—Stolen property—Receivers—Headman of tribe—Marriage and other ceremonies ...	78-81

## CHAPTER X.

Kallars—Origin of word—Division of class—Mélúr Kallars—Ambalacarans—Legend regarding immigration of the Kíl Nádú into Madura—Dealings with the Vellálans—Code of rules framed for their protection—Acquisition of territory—The “Than-arasu Nádú”—Refusal to pay tribute—Legend regarding origin of class—Mél Nádú Kallars settled in the Dindigul Valley—Head of tribe—Genealogical tree showing descent of the Pudukota Raja—Language—Peculiar disfigurement—The survey account of the savage disposition of Kallars—Crimes addicted to—Omens observed—As cattle traders—Training of the young—Marriage customs—Divorce—Practise the right of circumcision—Religion—Social rank—Head of clan or Ambalacar ... ..	82-94
--	-------

## CHAPTER XI.

Maravars—The great fighting race of former times—Division of class—Head of clan—Former history of Maravars—Genealogical tree showing descent of the present Setupati of Ramnád—History of the Setupatis—Village police—Origin of term—Maravars—Marriage customs—Divorces—Dress—Identification—Crimes addicted to—Disguises—Receivers of stolen property—Principal deity—Gambling Ahambadiyars—Division of class ... ..	95-116
--	--------

## CHAPTER XII.

Pariah or Pareiyan tribes—Common designation of class—As slaves—Species of slaves recognised—Classes of Pariahs—Vépúr Pariahs—Origin of—Villages inhabited by Vépúr Pariahs
---

	PAGE
—Crimes committed—Black mail or Mûlladikûli—Disguises— Methods of committing burglary—Implement used—The Mala- mars—Deities worshipped—Priests ' kavilgar system	... 117-129

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

General—Valiahs—Division of class—Derivation of term—Crimes committed—Dundasias—As watchmen or Kuttubadies—Tha- thars and Thotiyars	... .. 130
---	------------

---

APPENDIX I.—FAKIR COINERS	... .. 131-133
„ II.—PROFESSIONAL POISONERS	... .. 134-137

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## CHAPTER I.

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### ALAGIRIES.

#### CAPEMARIES.

IN the Madura district, some twelve miles to the north of Madura town, and situated at the base of a low range of hills, stands a temple, which is dedicated to the god "Kalla Alagar," or the god of thieves; from this temple the Alagiries take their name. The manager or "dharmakarthā" of the temple belongs to the Padayachi class, and "Kalla Alagar" is regarded by many classes of criminals as their chief deity. A certain portion (usually  $\frac{1}{8}$ th) of the spoil obtained after a series of successful predatory excursions is laid aside, and when the season of pilgrimage (November—December) comes round, is offered with many incantations and vows of allegiance to "Kalla Alagar."

The appellation "Alagiri" is given to them as a class of professional thieves and pick-pockets, and is also applied by the police to persons suspected by them whose castes are not positively known and who give a vacillating account of themselves, and more particularly to persons found in crowds at fairs and festivals who cannot give a full and satisfactory account of themselves.

Hindus of all classes, and occasionally Mussulmans also, are members of their fraternity; they may be described as forming a part of, or belonging to, the

great Satâni or mixed class, disciples of Chaitanya, a native of Bengal, who introduced the worship of "Krishna" into Southern India and died in 1527. In strict theory, they have no caste qualification but a religious one, for they profess to admit to their community any one who conforms to their religious views, and they are prepared to eat with any one who observes the same ritual as they do.

There are four classes of Alagiries, or more properly speaking they are known by four different appellations according to the districts or localities they frequent. They are—

- (1) Capemari Alagiri,
- (2) Donga Dasari Alagiri,
- (3) Gudu Dasari Alagiri, and
- (4) Padayachi Alagiri, known also as Ena or Thogamalai Koravar (see notes on Koravars).

*The Capemari Alagiries.*—The head-quarters of the Capemari Alagiries is Trivellore and its surrounding villages in the Chingleput district. Several small villages are almost entirely populated by these people. They are also to be found at Malûr and Gadnahalli near Bangalore, Kamalapuram and Baggalaitapalle of the Cuddapah district, Marikuppam near Porto Novo in South Arcot, and elsewhere, but their principal settlements are at the places above mentioned. These gangs are closely connected with each other by inter-marriage and have outstations as far distant as Palghât, where, in a village called Pedanâthy, a settlement of these people has been recently discovered

closely inter-related with the major gangs of Trivellore, Malúr and Kamalapuram.

They are said to be increasing and forming settlements in most other districts of the presidency, but statistical information to support this statement is unobtainable.

The head of the Capemari class of Alagiries lives in Trivellore, and is attached to the "Ahóbilam Mutt" as a paid servant. He is styled the "Golla Chetti," and the present holder of this office is a man known as Chinna Kuppaiah Chetti; his brother Pedda Kuppaiah was until recently the acknowledged leader of the Malúr gangs. At Trivellore, Malúr, Gadnahalli, Kamalapuram, Buggalaitapalle and Pedanâthy these Capemari Alagiries have, to all appearances, settled down to honest vocations, possessing lands and houses; but the lands are principally cultivated by others, not unfrequently by the village headmen, who in many cases are known to aid them in the disposal of stolen property.

They resemble the Soonariahs of Bundlekund and the Poona Bhamptas (members of which latter class are frequently met with on the railways of this presidency) with this exception, that they do not confine themselves to pilfering by day.\*

Both men and women are clever thieves, and the young are early trained in the art of picking pockets and snatching jewels from unsuspecting travellers. All the large fairs and festivals throughout the presidency are visited by these people in parties of four or

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\* Major Gunthorpe's *Notes on Criminal Tribes*.

five, usually accompanied by women and boys. The men adopt the disguise of respectable traders; well dressed, wearing caste marks and other outward signs of respectability, they gain admission to temples, caste chatrams and places resorted to by travellers and pilgrims; they acquaint themselves with the names of persons of good social standing and ascertain some facts connected with their private life; thus they are able to pass themselves off as acquaintances, and are taken into the confidence of their victims.

The women usually dress well, sometimes like Brahmans, and not unfrequently like devout widows paying vows at the shrine: the boys hover about cart-stands and ascertain what travellers there are: nothing escapes them, nor is anything too insignificant for them to purloin. When on a predatory excursion they always work singly and feign ignorance of others of their community.

A small lancet-shaped knife is invariably found with them; it is concealed in the mouth, and used to rip open carpet bags and to cut the strings of jewels worn by women and children. For the same purpose they also carry pieces of broken glass in the "Vadi Sanchi" or small bag worn at the waist.

The railways are their most lucrative fields of work, and each gang has its particular beat: they seldom encroach on the hunting ground of others of their fraternity. Starting in a gang of 4 or 5, accompanied by women and boys, they occupy separate compartments—some disguised as traders, others as wandering minstrels—and the women, as eminently respectable travellers, occupy the compartments re-

served for their sex. Adepts in the art of entertaining their fellow travellers, they soon learn for what purpose they are journeying, and when the unsuspecting traveller falls asleep, his jewels and valuables are taken ; the Alagiri leaves the train at the next station, and the gang unites at a place previously agreed upon, where the loot is divided share and share alike, with two portions for the successful thief. Night trains are usually selected, and they are always to be found in special trains running for the convenience of pilgrims and others attending festivals when women are always decked out in jewels. An instance of their cleverness may be quoted from the writer's experience. A busy junction at night, where changing of trains is necessary ; two unsuspecting women are travelling and much distressed at the confusion. A "respectable native gentleman" proffers his assistance, which is gladly accepted : he finds a compartment for the women and helps them in with their goods and chattels, and asks permission to accompany them : this is accorded, and he amuses the travellers with anecdotes. The elder of the women is the custodian of the jewels : she is therefore warned that the safest place for her to keep the bag containing the valuables is under her head when she sleeps : this is unsuspectingly done, and in the morning when the women awake they find the bag ripped open and the contents gone : their civil friend, needless to say, has also gone. He was afterwards arrested disguised as a travelling musician, and told the writer that for seven years he had been carrying on this lucrative trade. He was one of the Capemaries of Malúr.



Crime is not committed by Alagiries in places where they happen to be known by the local police, or where they have, on any former occasion, been arrested; it is thus exceptionally difficult to prove previous convictions against them: their *aliases* are so numerous that by names alone it is impossible to fix their identity. A well organized railway police, together with a system of free interchange of photographs of all persons found thieving on railway lines, seems to be the only means by which railway crime of this description can be successfully dealt with.

The men are, as a rule, fair and good looking, and particular as to their personal appearance; this may be accounted for by their never doing any manual labour. The women are comely and many are of loose character. Identification of Capemaries as a class is difficult: their disguises are complete, and they possess the faculty of carrying them out. Shifty and uncertain in their behaviour, they are continually on the look out for "a Kápu," their slang for a policeman (bangle-man!) in plain clothes. Caught redhanded, they affect a haughty demeanour at the indignity of being arrested. No hard and fast rule for the identification of these social pests can be laid down.

Their language is principally Telugu, but they also speak Tamil and Canarese, as well as a peculiar slang of their own.

"Honour among thieves" is apparently their maxim, for a Capemari never implicates another of his fraternity, and the family of an "unfortunate" who has gone to jail is provided for by the rest of the community.

Capemari women occasionally fraternize with Muhammadans and leave the main gangs. An instance of this is worthy of note. An outcaste Alagiri woman of the Malúr community took up with a gang of coiners from Hyderabad and was the instrument of passing the counterfeit coins. On the gang being arrested, the woman told the writer that she had left her husband some years previously for the famous coiner Galib Shah. Capemari boys are addicted to altering copper coins, especially pice, by giving them a coat of quicksilver; they pass them off as silver coins, and generally with success.

The domestic relations between man and wife are very lax: polygamy is allowed, as also widow remarriage. Infant marriages are rare. Wives are sometimes securities for debts contracted by their husbands and become the property of the creditor should the debt fail to be liquidated. Caste disputes and divorces which are easily obtained are arranged by punchayet presided over by the "Chetti" of the gang. This "worthy" does not directly join in their predatory excursions, but gets his share of the loot, and is mainly instrumental in the disposal of stolen property.

Their receivers are principally goldsmiths and liquor vendors in all the large towns and villages throughout the presidency, and the bargain usually made is one rupee for a rupee's weight in gold. Village headmen, as before stated, largely assist bands of Alagiries who have settled in their villages in the disposal of plunder.

## CHAPTER II.

ALAGIRIES—(*cont.*).

DONGA DASARIES—GUDU DASARIES, who are also called “Mucheri Kalas,” are the Alagiries of the more northern districts of the presidency, and are drawn from the Boya, Golla, Wudder and Salia castes. They sometimes style themselves “Golla Dasaries.” In the Nellore district they are called “Kathirivandlu” (scissor thieves).

The disguises usually adopted by them are those of the Gosseins and Byraghies; the prayers and incantations of religious mendicants are carefully studied, and none but a real Byraghi, or one thoroughly acquainted with the doings of these *quasi*-religious mendicants, can detect their artifices. They combine burglary with thieving.

Their headman is styled by them the “Gudu,” and with him rest the arrangements necessary in planning a predatory excursion. Dacoity is occasionally committed by them, but they chiefly confine themselves to burglary, which mode of crime is the most difficult of detection as experience has taught them.

The principal head-quarters of these people are the Cuddapah, Bellary, Kurnool, Nellore and North Arcot districts, but they are also to be found throughout the presidency in small bands disguised as *quasi*-religious mendicants.

In small parties, generally of 4 or 5, they set out on their predatory excursions, and first visit a temple

in the garb of Byraghies carrying the "Garadastambam" and the "tappai" and "samacalum"—symbols of a religious life; they carry out their disguises admirably and command the respect of the credulous rustic. Adepts in the art of reciting the Vedás, they gain admission to the houses of respectable villagers: the situation of the bolts and the geography of the house is taken in at a glance; a faint scratch on the door frames made with a piece of glass, which, like the Capemaries, they invariably carry, shows the position of the bolts, and indicates the work of the "Byraghi." The breach in the wall is made close to the bolt sufficiently large to admit of a man's arm being inserted and the bolt is drawn. This mode of housebreaking is known in other parts of India as the "buglee operation." The instrument used is called by them the "kuchi or gádi-kól." It is most ingeniously made, and is carried about by them on their begging tours. To the casual observer it is a musical instrument somewhat resembling the "Vina" in shape; but on a minute examination being made by an observant officer, it will be discovered that the instrument is composed of two parts capable of being separated from each other, in one of which halves is encased a sharp iron tool about 12 to 15 inches in length, octagon shaped, and tipped with steel.

The musical instrument is called by them a "Chûla," and on this in their role of Byraghi they play an unmusical accompaniment to their monotonous chanting of religious couplets.

The "Kuchi-kól" is a very effective implement

for boring through walls, and the operation is noiselessly and skilfully performed. Marks of the instrument may be detected if a careful inspection of the breach in the wall is made; they are sharp and clearly defined round the edges, and the hole usually slopes downwards towards the bolt. On the door being opened, a free exit through the house is first made to allow of escape in the event of the inmates being aroused. Jewels worn by sleeping women and children are the chief attractions, and these are dexterously removed; the threads of beads are cut with the pieces of glass or the lancet-shaped knife, and by morning the *quasi*-religious mendicants have put several miles between them and the scenes of their depredations. Burnt matches, and not unfrequently hard grains are found in the houses they have visited. This latter peculiarity is accounted for by Major Gunthorpe in his interesting *Notes on Criminal Tribes* in writing of the Bowries (Budducks) of Central India, who appear to closely resemble these people in their disguises and mode of committing burglaries. He says " . . . This is to learn the position of any brass or copper pots or boxes in the apartment: the noise of the seed hitting against them indicating the exact spot and thus showing in what direction all is clear and no obstacle to be expected for a further advance."

Like the Capemari their language is Telugu; they are also well up in Hindustani. They usually add "Dass" to their names, as for instance "Govindass," "Lutchmandass," and have many *aliases*.

The women seldom accompany the men on a burglary expedition ; but, like their Capemari sisters, they confine themselves to pilfering at fairs and festivals and reap a rich harvest on the railways. They are instrumental in the disposal of stolen property, and for this purpose associate with the Capemari gangs at Trivellore and Malúr.

The following account of a criminal class, calling themselves Batturajas or Battu Turakas, published in the *Police Weekly Circular, Madras*, No. 47 of 1881, is reproduced, as they have a close resemblance to the Gudu Dasaries:—

“ With the exception of three families residing in neighbouring villages in North

1. Yemmalavandlapalle.

2. Kambhamibapalle.

3. Yellalavandlapalle.

4. Yerraguntlapalle.

Arcot district, the Battu Turakas are confined entirely to the four hamlets noted in the margin,

which comprise the Revenue Payakat village of Agraharam in the Pelleru division of Cuddapah district.

“ They are known to the Cuddapah and North Arcot police as criminals, and a note is made whenever any adult leaves his village ; but, as they commit their depredations far from home and convert their spoil into hard cash before they return, it is difficult to get evidence against them.

“ Ten or 12 of these leave home at once ; they usually work in parties of 3 or 4, and they are frequently absent for months together. They have methods of communicating intelligence to their associates when separated from them, but the only one of these methods that is known is by means of their leaf-

plates which they sew in a peculiar manner and leave after use in certain places previously agreed upon. These leaf-plates can be recognized by experts, but all that these experts can learn from them is that Battu Turakas have been in the neighbourhood recently. On their return to their village an account of their proceedings is rendered and their spoil is divided equally among the whole community, a double share being, however, given to the actual thief or thieves.

“They usually disguise themselves as Brahmans, and, in the search of some of their houses lately, silk cloths worn only by Brahmans were found, together

1. Rudrakshamalas.
2. Tulasimalas.
3. Saligranes.
4. Narrow-necked copper vessels used by Vaishnava and Madwa Brahmans.
5. Sandhia Panchapa Warus and Doddaranis.

with other articles necessary for the purpose as specified in the margin. They are also instructed in Sanscrit and in all the outward requisites of Brahmanism. A Telugu Brahman

would soon find out that they are not Brahmans, and it is on this account that they confine their depredations to the Tamil country, where allowance is made for them as rude uncivilized Telugus. They frequent choultries, where their very respectable appearance disarms suspicion, and watch for opportunities of committing thefts, substituting their own bags or bundles (filled with rubbish) for those they carry off. They are very timid and consequently very cautious and patient, going in only for a safe thing.” This account given by an experienced officer of police points to the Battu Turakas being an offshoot of the great Alagiri class.

The Donga (Gudu) Dasari Alagiries occasionally take the role of traders in cattle and visit the cattle markets; they will, however, always have their "religious" brethren somewhere handy, and the subterfuge is used merely as a means of collecting information. During the "Pongul" and "Dassarah" festivals the "religious Dasari" may be frequently seen with his sacred bull asking alms.

Before proceeding on a predatory excursion, offerings of sheep and fowls are made to the goddess "Gan-gamah." Omens are carefully observed. Women of all classes, with the exception of the "Malas" and "Madigas," are admitted to their community and the marriage ceremony is performed by a Brahman of the "Satâni" creed. Marriage laws are easily relaxed, and polygamy is allowed.

The priest of the Ahóbilam temple near Rudravaram in the Sirvél taluk of the Kurnool district exercises over these people complete jurisdiction in spiritual matters, and tribute is paid yearly to him. Caste disputes and the like are settled by punchayets formed of members of the gang presided over by the Gudu.

PADAYACHI ALAGIRIES (*vide* Thogamalai Koravars). These are the professional thieves of the southern districts, with their head-quarters at or near Pondicherry. They are skilful counterfeiters and very dexterous in passing the coins, women being usually the medium. Like the Capemaries they visit all the large fairs and festivals in the south and carry on a lucrative trade. They worship at the shrine of "Kalla Alagar." Their language is Tamil.



## CHAPTER III.

## JOGHIES.

THE Joghies of the Madras Presidency are a class of vagrants who earn a precarious livelihood by snake-charming, pig-breeding, juggling and the like. The derivation of the word Joghi seems to be the Sanscrit "Yogin," a follower of the Yoga system . . . a magician, conjurer, one supposed to have obtained supernatural powers.\* They are exclusively a Telugu sect and form a division of the Satâni or mixed caste.

There are 19 sects among Joghies, divided into two main divisions :—

*Division A.*

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Cherukuruvalu. | 4. Vakitavadu.  |
| 2. Sivaralavadu.  | 5. Gollarivadu. |
| 3. Mupunivadu.    | 6. Peranavadu.  |

*Division B.*

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Chriarapuvadu. | 8. Kullavadu.     |
| 2. Bintahavadu.   | 9. Jallivadu.     |
| 3. Enthukuruvalu. | 10. Pyralavadu.   |
| 4. Gundavadu.     | 11. Uraguntivadu. |
| 5. Tharavadu.     | 12. Sappidivadu.  |
| 6. Vadapillavadu. | 13. Dasirapuvadu. |
| 7. Amurthavadu.   |                   |

---

\* *Vide* Monier Williams' Sanscrit Dictionary.

The classes under division A are supposed to take higher rank than those in division B, and do not mix with Hindus of the lower castes, Pariahs and the like, but strangely enough intermarry with those under class B. The principal districts in which the Joghies are to be found and where they have formed criminal habits are Chingleput, North and South Arcot and part of Nellore, and in these districts they have, of recent years, given considerable trouble. Highway robbery and dacoity are the crimes they chiefly confine themselves to, but occasionally turn to burglary; but in this latter form of crime they are, as yet, clumsy, and detection of a burglary committed by Joghies is comparatively easy. They are, however, gradually developing the faculty of committing burglary on scientific principles.

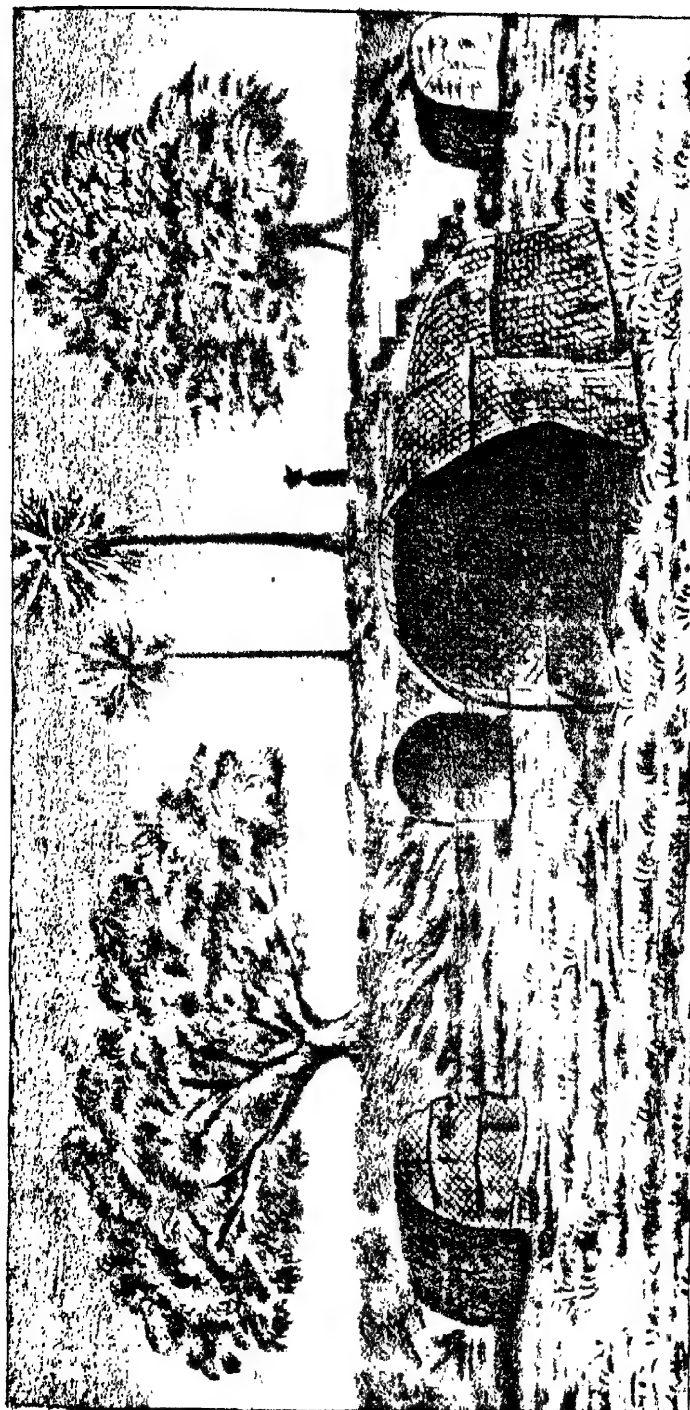
Disguises are not adopted by them, nor do they wander far from their encampments when committing crime; they usually confine their operations to their own neighbourhood.

As breeders of pigs they take them in droves to Madras and other large towns for sale, and it appears to be at the instigation of their constituents in Chin-tadripetta and Black Town, Madras, that the Joghies have taken to crime, for they are satisfied with the gleanings themselves while the harvest is reaped by their receivers. Formerly they were chiefly known as harmless wanderers, assisting at village revels, soothsayers, &c.; but contaminated by peculant traders in Madras and other centres, they have developed criminal habits which are likely to prove troublesome.

Headmen of Joghies are styled by them *Jangams*. With the Jangam rests the organization of a gang crime. He settles caste disputes and receives two shares of booty. Expeditions are planned when members of a tanda or gang are assembled for a marriage or tribal function. Omens are then rigidly observed, and should they be adverse, months frequently intervene before the experiment is tried again.

The headman of the Joghi class is supposed to reside at Sreeperembatur in the Chingleput district, but about this "worthy" much is uncertain: he is called the Jangam Poojali, and wears the sacred thread (punúl), but does not play an important part at their religious or social functions, nor does he get a share of spoil, and few of the tribe appear to know of his existence.

Joghies encamp on the outskirts of villages, usually on a plain or dry bed of a tank; their huts or gudisays are made of palmyra leaves plaited *with five strands* forming an arch, completely open at one side and closed at the other (*vide* plate 1). They occasionally cultivate lands on what is known as the "Varum" tenure and in some villages in the Wandiwash taluk of the North Arcot district and in the Madurantakam taluk of Chingleput district they have settled down and are in the pay of the village headmen, who benefit largely by the criminal propensities of their protégés; they are also invariably assisted by their patrons should suspicion rest on them. A case is on record where a village magistrate incited an attack on a small party of police who commenced the search of a



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LITHO. SURVEY OFFICE, MADRAS, 1897.

JOGHI HUTS IN A SEMI-PERMANENT ENCAMPMENT.



Joghi encampment for property stolen in a series of dacoities committed by these people. Another indited a petition complaining of the hardships these "honest folk" had to undergo by the system of police surveillance.

The Joghies resemble the "Kuluvas" of the southern districts of the Presidency, who also tend pigs, and also the Pichagoontas, into which class they marry; this latter class are described as mendicants, doctors, herbalists and the like, and, like the Joghies, formerly acted the part of heralds, but since their contamination by, and association with, others of criminal habits, they have abandoned their vocation of heralds.

The betrothal and marriage ceremonies of the Joghies are peculiar and interesting. On consent being obtained from the girl's father or guardian, the bridegroom elect gives a boar and Rs. 8-12-0 in cash as earnest money. The boar is killed, the head is taken by the girl's people and the flesh goes towards a general feast. The bridegroom elect has further to provide copious libations of toddy and arrack for the assembled company. On a subsequent Friday, fixed by mutual consent, the bridegroom elect pays 3 pagodas to the girl's people as "voli" (Tamil வலி) and the next day a pandal is erected in front of the hut (gudisay), a sheep is then sacrificed to their household god "Perumal," and, on the following day, the "nalagoo" ceremony is gone through, after which a general feed takes place. The "tali" is tied the next day by the "Jangam" of the caste, who pro-

nounces the couple man and wife. The music on these festive occasions is the same as that used by them as snake charmers. Their women are adepts in playing the instruments which they call "Magiday kudikay," "Nayasaram" or "Peleankushal," and usually take these with them when on their begging tours.

Re-admission to caste after conviction, when imprisonment is involved, is an easy matter. A feed and drink at the expense of the "unfortunate," generally defrayed from the share of property which is kept by his more fortunate kinsfolk, are all that is necessary except the ceremony common to other classes, of having the tongue slightly burnt by a piece of hot gold; this latter is always performed by the Jangam of the gang.

Their language is Telugu, spoken with a tribal accent; they also know Tamil.

On an excursion being agreed upon by members of a Joghi gang, others of the fraternity encamped in the vicinity are consulted; in some isolated spot a Nim tree is chosen as a meeting place; here the preliminaries are settled and their god Perumal is invoked; they set out in bands of from 12 to 15, armed themselves with stout bamboo sticks; scantily clad, and with their heads muffled up, they wait the arrival of the carts passing their place of hiding; in twos or threes they attack the carts, which are usually driven off the road and not unfrequently upset, and the travellers are made to give all they possess: the property is then given to the headman of the gang for safe-keeping

and he secretes it in the vicinity of his hut, and sets about the disposal of it : their receivers are to be found among the "respectable" oilmongers of the villages in the vicinity of their encampments, and the village headmen who, as said before, reap a rich harvest in their dealings with their Joghi protégés, while property not disposed of locally is taken to Madras.

The women of the tribe are very depraved in their morals, and prostitution is common. They may be seen at all fairs and festivals, decked in gaudy attire and laden with brass bangles and bead necklaces, where they profess to tell fortunes. They wear the choolce fastened at the back by two knots and cloths with gaudy borders. The marriage tie is very easily relaxed : the sum of seven rupees is levied on the offending swain and the woman becomes his property "to have and to hold." Widow remarriage is freely allowed, and young women may marry at any age. The women of the "Dasirapuvadu" class do not marry, but may be found in almost all the large towns and villages as prostitutes : they are of great use to their community in assisting in the disposal of stolen property ; they are, as a rule, comely, dress well, and live under the protection of Vaniahs (oilmongers).

The boys of the class are employed by their elders in stealing grain stored at "kalams" (threshing floors), and, as opportunity offers, by slitting grain bags loaded in carts. They seldom accompany their elders in their expeditions for the commission of highway robbery or dacoity. In wandering from



village to village, Joghies utilize asses to carry their tents or pâls; the packs of these are used as receptacles for storing cloths obtained in predatory excursions. As a class, they are dog fanciers, and their dogs are always branded with emblematic marks—a tree (the much revered *nîm*), a scorpion, and so on.

The males are scantily clothed and are easily identified, as Joghies' red waist cloths are in especial request. In point of physique they are above the ordinary cultivator and have a finer cast of features.

## CHAPTER IV.

## YANADIES.

THE Yanadi caste tradition is that they were the aborigines of the wilds in the vicinity of the Pulicat lake, where they fished and hunted at will till they became enslaved by the Reddies. They are to be found principally in the Godávári, Kistna, Nellore and parts of the North Arcot and Cuddapah districts.

Yanadies appear to have held the same position in Reddi families formerly as Kasas and Dasís do to this day in zemindari families of the Razú, Velama and Kamawa castes. The head of the tribe lives at Sriharikota on the borders of the Pulicat lake, where attempts have been made by Government to reclaim these people from the state of barbarism, in which, previous to 1835, they lived : dwelling in jungles, they lived on fruits, roots and other jungle produce, and were rarely seen.

There are three divisions of Yanadies, viz.,

- (1) Reddi Yanadies,
- (2) Challa or Garappa or Chatla Yanadies, and
- (3) Adavi Yanadies.

The Reddi Yanadies are a settled class, employed chiefly as cooks by Panta Reddies, and have no intercourse with the Challa and Adavi Yanadies, who are looked upon as outcastes. These latter hold an important place among the criminals of the northern districts.

The wild *Adavi* Yanadies of the present day are houseless wanderers, who do not take the trouble to

put up even temporary or moveable sheds, but content themselves with the shelter afforded by shrubs tied together. They are true nomads. The "*Challa*" Yanadies (also called "*Garappa*" or dry land or "*Chatla*"—tree—Yanadies) live in huts on the outskirts of villages and pick up a precarious livelihood by collecting forest produce, snaring and hunting game and doing odd jobs for villagers. They are scarcely to be distinguished from the Adavi Yanadi until a prolonged residence in the neighbourhood of one village arouses sufficient sympathy with them to ameliorate their lot to a certain extent, when crime becomes no longer an absolute necessity. The "*Adavi*" Yanadi out of the Nellore district is an hereditary and professional burglar, who has no other occupation. He has been found to be irreclaimable.

The Reddi and Challa Yanadies are employed occasionally as kavilgars (village watchers) in the Kistna and Godávári districts, where they possess the qualification of having been, or still being, burglars: they are mostly settled, but few of them hold lands. Their language is a corrupt form of Telugu; their type of features is Mongolian, broad about the cheek bones, which are more or less prominent, with a pointed chin, a slight moustache, no whiskers, and a scanty straggling beard over the forepart of the chin. The women are tolerably well featured, but have a wild, timid, shrinking look.

The practice of employing Yanadies as kavilgars (watchers) is being discouraged, and many will probably take to nomadism for a time.

In the upland taluks of the Godávári and Vizagapatam districts and in the south of the Ganjam district there are a few scattered gangs of Yanadies called *Nakkala Vandlu* from their snaring and eating jackals. They call themselves "Turpú Yanadies," but they are not acknowledged by their southern confreres, though their manners and customs are identical with those of the Adavi Yanadies. The head-quarters of these "Nakkala Vandlu" is the Palkonda taluk of the Vizagapatam district. They are less daring thieves than the Southern Yanadies and are inferior to them in physique.

Some of the immigrant Yanadies of the Kistna district are engaged as ploughmen, but either because they were seemingly engaged for the purpose, or because they have subsequently corrupted their masters, this is in most cases only their ostensible employment their real occupation being burglary, the proceeds of which are received and disposed of by their masters. It is noticed that Yanadi ploughmen are, as a rule, better off than others following the same occupation. Dacoity and highway robbery are committed by them in an organized manner and occasionally great violence is used. Sheep and goat lifting by stealth or with violence is a favourite crime of the "settled" Yanadies, and recent investigations have shown that Yanadies join with Erukals in the commission of crimes with violence which formerly were mainly attributed to the Erukals, and not unfrequently do they disguise themselves as Erukals in order to throw suspicion on that class.

Among the settled Yanadies the men are able to gather information without attracting attention, by visits to their relations among the kavilgars, who are always willing and able to afford the required information. The women are not employed for this purpose, but are useful in the disposal of stolen property. At dusk they go round on their begging tours selling mats, which they make, and take the opportunity of dropping a word to the women of cheap things for sale, and the temptation is seldom resisted; stolen property is also carried in their marketing baskets to the village grocer, the Komati. Among the wild (Adavi) Yanadies, women are told off to acquire information while begging, but they chiefly rely on the liquor shopkeepers for news which may be turned to useful account.

Yanadies have no tribal marks or party badges, nor have they symbols of rank or station among them. The huts of the settled classes are similar in construction to those of other nomads, viz., a frame work of bamboos bent into an arch forming an entrance of about 2 feet square; this is covered with some thatching material, grass, millet stalks and the like; their huts are not however so well constructed as those of the Koravars, Joghies and Domaras, being of a much rougher make. (See notes on Koravars, Joghies and Dombaras). Their household gods are few and of the rudest. Flesh is eaten by them with the exception of beef, and game, under which category they include rats, iguanas and the like, is much appreciated.

The betrothal and marriage ceremonies are very

primitive and take place at the bridegroom's house and not, as usual among Hindus, at the bride's. When the ceremonies are completed—the guests well refreshed with food and drink—the happy couple are bathed, smeared with saffron, and dressed in new cloths, and a leaf (usually betel) is then folded small and tied to their right wrists. This is a relic of the "*kankanan*" or talisman tied on with many mantrams to absolve the wearer from the necessity of purification from defilement occasioned by travels and the like. This talisman is removed on the third day after the marriage is consummated. Brahmans never officiate at their ceremonies. The post of officiating priest is held by the bride's maternal uncle if there be one : for the nonce, he invests himself with the "*sandhyam*" or sacred thread, marks his forehead horizontally with ashes and a dot of red ochre (the mark of the Saivite). He decides the auspicious hour, and, being ignorant of astrology, determines it by fixing an arrow, or an imitation made out of the screwpine, perpendicularly in the ground, and watching carefully till the shadow disappears. The important moment has then arrived and the tali is tied. The custom of using an arrow is said to be symbolical of their hunting proclivities. Among the wild (Adavi) Yanadies these ceremonies are not observed. When a man and a maid, wife or widow, agree to live together, they do so, and are received as man and wife. Polygamy is allowed, as also widow remarriage. Divorces are easily obtained, and desertion of a wife is not punishable by the caste. Children are never called after any living relative,

but after some family god or goddess, their favourite deities being *Kativi*, *Kumalama* and *Nagamanja*, the latter being especially held in reverence by women as the "snake goddess." Cloths of a peculiar pattern, said to be beloved of these deities, are always worn by the women during pregnancy. Ankamma, Poleramma (the village goddess of agriculture) and other deities are worshipped.

Excepting the hereditary head of the caste at Sriharikota, whose influence is said to have been great at one time, but whose office now is merely honorary, there are no permanent office bearers in the caste. The elders are looked upon as natural leaders and authorities. There is not much sociability or conviviality among Yanadies as a race except among the wild classes after successful forays; on such occasions the women deck themselves out in gaudy attire with stolen cloths and jewels and the gang gives itself up to feasting. As a race they are, like most criminal classes, much addicted to liquor; the wild Yanadies especially being on terms of friendship with the vendors of arrack and toddy. This, however, does not prevent their helping themselves to toddy from the palms. The vendors do not complain, for their trade in bartering toddy for stolen goods is too lucrative to be lightly interfered with. It is these licensed vendors who cater for the wild Yanadies by carrying provisions to them in their haunts.

Yanadies possess considerable knowledge of the medicinal properties of roots and herbs, and are said to be successful in the treatment of certain diseases.

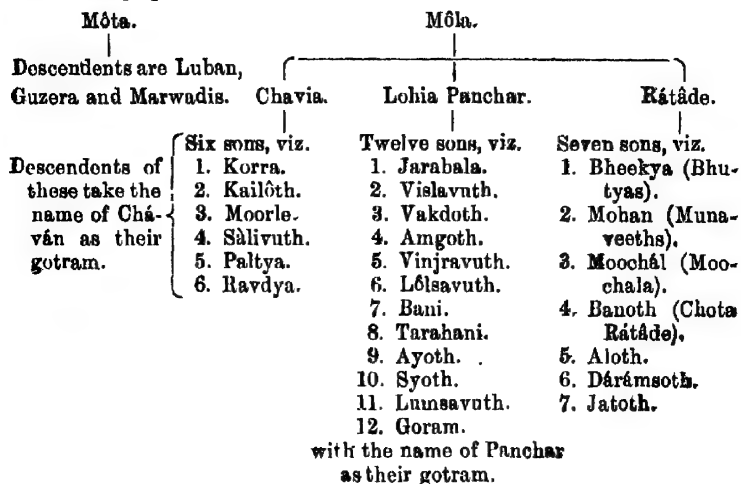
An iron implement called the "Sikkaloo kól" is kept by them ostensibly for the purpose of digging these roots, but it is really their jemmy and used in the commission of burglary. When found with it, the excuse they give is that it is for the purpose of digging roots. It is an ordinary iron tool pointed at both ends, one end being fitted in a wooden handle. With this they can dig through a wall noiselessly and quickly, and many houses are thus broken into in one night until a good loot is obtained. Housebreakings are usually committed during the first quarter of the moon. Yanadies confess their own crimes readily, but will never implicate an accomplice.



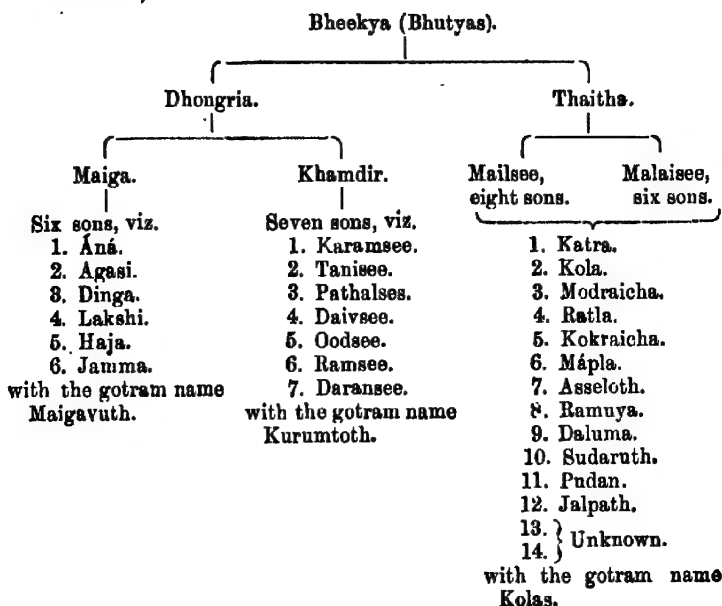
## CHAPTER V.

## LUMBÁDIES—SUGALIES.

LUMBÁDIES, also called Bànàjaries, Brinjaris and Gôhurs. They are supposed to take their origin from Váli and Sugriva. The legend is this :—There were two brothers, Môta and Môla, descendants of Sugriva. Môla had no issue, so being an adept in gymnastic feats, he went with his wife Radha and exhibited his skill at “Rathanatch” before three rajahs. They were so taken with Môla’s skill and the grace and beauty of Radha and her playing of the “nagara” or drum, that they asked what they could do for them. Môla asked each of the rajahs for a boy that he might adopt him as his son. This request was accorded, and Môla adopted three boys. Their names were Chavia, Lohia Panchar and Râtâde. These three boys, in course of time, grew up and were married, and the following genealogical tree shows their issue :—



From Bheekya, the eldest son of Rátâde, started the clan known as the Bhutyas, and from this clan three minor sub-divisions as the Maigavuth, Kurumtoths and Kolas, thus :—



These three gotrams are known under the main head of “ Bhutyas ” ; they consider themselves one clan, and will not intermarry.

Another main division of the Lumbádi caste is the “ Vádáthyá ” or Northern division. They are chiefly to be found in His Highness the Nizam’s dominions.

This class is divided into twelve families, viz.—

- |           |              |              |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Bádhá. | 5. Hálá.     | 9. Ajmaira.  |
| 2. Bhôda. | 6. Konisi.   | 10. Thaira.  |
| 3. Lakha. | 7. Dhara.    | 11. Maira.   |
| 4. Lana.  | 8. Ghootgal. | 12. Unknown. |

The Chavan, Puchar and Vádáthyá gotrams intermarry with the Bhutyas : the Vádáthyá gotram was

in the days of yore on terms of deadly feud with the Bhutyas, but this has been worn off by the kindly hand of time. The Bhutyas form the principal clan among the Lumbádies and move about with large droves of pack bullocks through the Ceded Districts, occasionally visiting the southern districts. They were formerly the carriers of the country, but, since the introduction of railways, their trade has been ruined, and many have betaken themselves to agricultural pursuits. In Cuddapah district numbers have settled down and hold land on puttah and live in respectable houses, but as a class they are essentially nomads. The tribes inhabiting the Nizam's dominions are those chiefly addicted to crimes of a grave nature—more especially dacoity—and, up to quite a recent date, organized bands of these depredators were in the habit of crossing the frontier over the Tungabhadra river and committing serious dacoities in the Kistna and Kurnool districts. 9069.

Each tribe is divided into clans or tandas with a headman, styled the Naik, whose authority over the gang is complete, and with him rests the organization of gang crime.

Their language, which they call Lânda, is a corrupt Mahratta mixed with Hindustani; they also speak Canarese and Telugu.

In the social scale they are inferior to Kapús, but superior to Yanadies, Erukalas and Wudders.

The men are fine muscular fellows capable of enduring long and fatiguing marches. Their ordinary dress is the "dhoty" with short trousers, and

frequently gaudy turbans and caps, in which on festive occasions they indulge. They also affect a considerable amount of jewellery.

The women are, as a rule, comely, and above the average height of women of the country. They are easily identified by their dress and the profusion of jewels they wear.

Their costume is the "lainga" or gown of Karwar cloth, red or green, with a quantity of embroidery. The chola or bodice, with embroidery in the front and on the shoulders, covers the bosom and is tied by variegated cords at the back, the ends of the cords being ornamented with cowries and beads; a covering cloth of Karwar cloth, with embroidery, is fastened in at the waist and hangs at the side with a quantity of tassels and strings of cowries.

Their jewels are very numerous and include strings of beads of 10 or 20 rows with a cowrie as a pendant called the "cheed" threaded on horse hair, a silver "hasali" (necklace), a sign of marriage equivalent to the tali.

Brass or horn bracelets, 10 to 12 in number, extending to the elbow on either arm with a "guzera" or piece of embroidered silk, 1 inch wide, tied to the right wrist.

Anklets of ivory or horn are only worn by married women; they are removed on the death of the husband.

"Pachala" or silk embroidery adorned with tassels and cowries is also worn as an anklet by all women.

Their other jewels are "mukaram" or nose ornament, a silver "kania" or pendant from the upper part of the ear attached to a silver chain which hangs to the shoulder, and a profusion of silver, brass and lead rings.

Their hair is, in the case of unmarried women, unadorned, brought up and tied in a knot at the top of the head; with married women it is fastened, in like manner, with a cowry or a brass button, and heavy pendants or "gujuris" are fastened at the temples. This latter is an essential sign of marriage; and its absence is a sign of widowhood.

Unlike the "Lubhans" or "Lumbhánas," who are closely allied to the Lumbádies, as taking their descent from Môta the elder brother, the men do not wear head feathers on festive occasions.

Lumbádi women when carrying water are fastidious in the adornment of the pad which is placed on their heads called the "gala." They cover it with cowries and attach to it an embroidered cloth called "*Phúlia*," ornamented with tassels and cowries.

Lumbádies are not admitted into village communities and societies, but live separately as far from villages as possible, the reason given being that it is more convenient for herding their droves of cattle. Their tents or pâls are made of stout coarse cloth fastened with ropes; in moving camp, these habitations are carried with their goods and chattels on their pack bullocks; they seldom make long marches except when on predatory excursions.

Formerly, dacoities by Lumbádies were com-

mitted on the most extensive scale, and even to a recent date instances of large organized dacoities have occurred in the Ceded Districts ; but they confine themselves principally to dacoities on a small scale on highways and in houses in isolated hamlets, cattle lifting and occasionally to grain thefts.

Burglary is not attempted by them, which is a matter of congratulation, for the maxim “nothing succeeds like success” would be adopted by them, and, being as a class fearless, they would prove a formidable addition to the many classes of criminals who now look on burglary as an easy and certain means of livelihood.

They are clever herdsmen and are frequently employed by villagers to tend their cattle ; in this way, and from friendly liquor-vendors, much information is gained as to itinerant parties : before proceeding on one of their excursions, the men selected by the Naik move from the encampment, not unfrequently accompanied by their women, who are as interested in the success of the expedition as the men themselves. Arrived at the scene of the enterprise they invoke the goddess “Durga” or “Durgamma ;” a representation of this deity they have engraved on a silver plate, which is in the keeping of the naik of the tanda. During this ceremony of invoking the good will of Durga, a favourable omen is anxiously looked for ; if the omen is considered unfavourable, the expedition is abandoned for a time. Another interesting custom observed by them before proceeding on a predatory excursion may be given ; a token,

usually a leaf, is secreted in some hidden place before proceeding to invoke Durga; the "Durgamma pujari," one of their own class, who wears the sacred thread and is invested with his sacred office by reason of his powers of divination, lights a fire, and calling on the goddess for aid, treads the fire out and names the token hidden by the party; his word is considered an oracle, and the pujari points out the direction the party is to take.

Their favourable and unfavourable signs are the same as those believed in by most criminal classes : a few may be given—

(1) A crow flying across their path from left to right is good.

(2) A snake seen moving across their path from left to right is good.

(3) An antelope bounding from left to right is good.

(4) A crow flying from right to left is indicative of great success.

(5) A child pulling the cloth of one of the party before he sets out is bad.

(6) A jackal seen crossing their path from left to right is bad.

(7) An owl hooting to the left is *very unpropitious*.

Lumbádies have their receivers of stolen property among all sorts and conditions of men, but particularly liquor shop-keepers, coppersmiths, the peculant Komati, and not unfrequently, as is the case with many other predatory tribes, village head-

men, who reap a rich harvest in their dealings with their less favoured brethren among the criminal classes. Identifiable property is not brought to the encampment, but is buried in convenient places in the sandy beds of ravines. They are expert cattle lifters, and often annex large herds; but this is chiefly in wild and unfrequented tracts. If questioned by an inquisitive passer-by, the answer they give is that the cattle belong to villagers who have sent out them to graze under their care. After a lapse of time the stolen cattle are disposed of singly or in pairs at distant cattle fairs.

The naik or headman of the gang takes an active part in the commission of crime and receives two shares of the spoil in the division. In the event of the gang or a portion of it being convicted, the naik is responsible for the welfare of the families of the unfortunate; should the naik also happen to be unfortunate, an acting man is chosen as his successor, and upon him devolve all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the office.

In committing crimes as before specified, viz., dacoity, &c., Lumbádies are invariably armed with sickles ("gandkatties"), sticks (gadées), and, if resistance is offered, use considerable violence: the women have been known to take a leading part in dacoities and to heat off an attack by villagers on a gang of Lumbádies engaged in a serious village dacoity.

The customs observed at betrothals and marriages are primitive, and the marriage tie is easily dissolved. The average price paid for a Lumbádi bride is 41



fanams, or approximately five rupees, and four bulls. No women of the bridegroom's clan accompany the men on the visit to the bride's clan on the occasion of the wedding, and during the festival the women of the bride's clan form the guard of the tanda, the men being usually hopelessly intoxicated. When the marriage is completed, the bride's father presents her with ten changes of raiment and a young bull with pack saddles; her trousseau is then complete. The ceremony is performed by a bhát or bard of the tribe.

Lumbádies are allowed to marry women of other castes which are not like the Madigas, Malas, &c., inferior in the social scale to their own; but the offspring of such marriages, or their descendents, will not be considered true Lumbádies of the gotram till after the third generation. Infant marriage is allowed but little practised, and widow remarriage freely permitted.

Oaths made are held to be most binding, and it is said that formerly a practice of ordeal by fire was prevalent among the tribe to prove innocence: instances of this of late years have occurred proving the existence of the custom.

The office of priest or bhát is hereditary; he visits, or is said to visit, each tanda once in eight or ten years, and demands contributions as he goes along: his head-quarters is on the Nallaymullai hills of the Kurnool district, but his power is purely nominal. The Naik or headman of each tanda is the real authoritative head; he it is who settles caste disputes, levies fines, &c., while the local "Durgamma pujari" is the spiritual head.

As a class, they are particularly fond of music and

dancing, and the men and women join together in revels: their musical instrument is the “Nagara” or dhole, a kind of drum; on this they play monotonous accompaniments to their historical songs, the subject of which chiefly relates to the fights of their ancestors over cattle breeding and of Rama’s and Lutchma’s valor as narrated in the Ramayanam.

The following evidence given by a member of a notorious gang of Lumbádi dacoits, which was successfully broken up in Mysore in 1884, is interesting as showing the organized manner in which dacoities are planned and carried out by them; I give it in his own words:—

“I was near Raidurga before the famine and belonged to Peru Naik’s tanda. During the famine, that is to say six or seven years ago, we came to Mysore and stopped near Shicarpur. With us the members of another tanda, which was led by Bhann, also came and encamped near us in Shicarpur. Bhojya was then in Bhann’s tanda: grain became dear and there was no fodder for cattle near Raidurga, and we, therefore, came and stopped for about a month near Shicarpur. In my tanda there were about 15 or 16 men. In Bhann’s tanda also there were about 15 or 20 men. These 16 men belonging to our tandas were convicted and imprisoned for committing a dacoity in a washerman’s house there. I do not know the name of the village, but it was further to the north and in the direction of Shicarpur. Thence we left that place, and after having been for a month in a place called Mayigond, we came and encamped near Gora-

samuddar in Chellakere taluk. Bhann's tanda did not accompany us. A month after our encamping in Gorasamuddar, Hema Naik and Valu Naik came with their tandas and encamped there, the former with 40 and the latter also with that number of men. Leaving that camp again, we came to a place near Kadaripalli in Chellakere taluk and encamped there. Thence again we sent away our tandas to Budipura in the Heriyur taluk and 15 or 20 of us went away to commit robberies towards Nonampully and Amarapur in Her Majesty's territories. Within two or three days they joined the encampment in Heriyur. I did not go. Dongriya, Baly, Ramdos, Lakky, Bada Somla, Kala Jesya, Keemya and others had all gone for that excursion. Thence we came and settled near Dindavar. Leaving the tandas there, a party went towards Bellave of the Tumkur district, and after committing dacoities in two places returned within two or three days. I did not accompany that raid also. Thence we went near Huliya—I mean the tanda was removed. We stopped there a month and then we went to Tiptur—I mean for excursion only. A party went. I did not go even there. There some cartmen and others were robbed. Thence we removed the tanda to a stream on the other side of Hosadrug. There is a kanave called Bhutapanna Kanave near Huliya. I had gone out for that raid. There we committed a dacoity, and again at Arsmangundi. Then again we changed our tanda to Lokatolalu. We left our tanda here and a party went away towards Kanakatte. There we committed a dacoity. I was

then present. Then we plundered on the other side of Nagpuree. From there we went towards Duddu of the Hassan district. There is a road there from Tiptur, and in that cross road we plundered about 15 or 20 carts. From these raids we returned home to our tandas. Then we changed our camp again to Kandwadi and ourselves went towards Berur and there attacked and plundered the marriage party. We returned from there. Thence we went away towards Bharamsagar near Vijiyapur. Leaving our tanda there, we went towards Tiptur. I did not go. A party had gone. Thence we went straight towards Huliya—I mean we took our tanda there. Leaving the tanda there a party went towards the Sibi temple and there committed some plunders. I had not gone. Thence we returned home and once more went towards Amarapur and committed some dacoities. I was one of the party then. There the tandas separated. Hema Naik's tanda quarrelled with us and went and encamped near Bharamsagar near Chellakere. My own and that of Valu Naik went away to the other side of Huliya and there encamped. Hema Naik's tanda people robbed some people at Kyatkere near Chitaldroog. The Sircar people came to our tanda in connection with that occurrence, and we (both the tandas) ran away from there towards Munduge in Dharwar. There we stopped away. While we were there we committed two raids on Mysore. I had come once. It was at Kudlige and on another occasion near Harpanhalli. We had not come to Mysore. Cartmen were robbed there. In one of those raids one of our

men by name Ramchand was killed. After this we went away towards Gajindragadu and thence to Golluok Mundrigi. There we stopped for three or four months and did not commit any robberies. We had gone to hire our bullocks twice or thrice. Meanwhile one Toadi (a woman) brought news that Hema Naik's party were near Gutti, having run away from Bharamsagar. Shortly after Ramdas, Jayaram, Amrya not in court, and Nandya now deceased of Hema Naik's tanda came to us. There they told us that Gola Naik had been caught at Chitaldroog, that some had run away towards Gooti, and that they came running there leaving their families near Kurnool. Ramdas offered to Peru Naik that if he gave him 10 rupees he would bring Hema Naik's party and that they might then go somewhere for committing robberies. Within 15 or 20 days he returned with all of Hema Naik's tanda, and there we all assembled together. We were all there for eight or ten days, during which time all the leaders conspired to commit fresh raids as their cattle and all property had been taken by the Sircar people and we started towards the Mulnad. But before this we of Peru Naik's tanda had gone towards Gudikote and there committed some robberies. There was Tota Naik's tanda there, and four or five of us came there. Peru Naik, myself, Hamnaik, C. Somla. My own younger brother is Peru Naik and his marriage had to be contracted. Sola Naik said that the Sircar people were in our pursuit and that no marriage was then possible. He said that if we came to the Mulnad he knew some 'Heggades'

houses there which he said might be plundered and that the marriage might also be celebrated there. Hema Naik was sent for and he agreed to send his party. As agreed we of the three tandas, that is to say of Peru Naik, Valu Naik and Hema Naik, came towards Mulnad. That is to say, we left our tandas near Bommenhalli and ourselves went on an excursion to Mulnad. Straightways we went to Shicarpur. There in the jungle some of our people were in advance and others were seated under a tamarind tree. When three Brahmans were seen coming towards us. They were riding on ponies. They saw some of us and came towards us calling out "robbers;" we were about 30 or 40 people. I too was present. A consultation was held, and it was decided that if we let these Brahmans go, they would go and raise an alarm, and that our programme to commit depredations in Mulnad would be spoiled, and that, therefore, all the three should be killed. Seven or eight persons went and beat them. One of these party (I mean of our own) had a gandkatti, a sword, and some clubs. The three Brahmans were beaten with them and killed. Tuljya, Ratnya and Chandya Valya, not here, struck them dead. Tuljya had the sword, Valya had the knife and the others had clubs. The others also had surrounded them, but it was these four that cut and hacked the bodies. Thence we went straight on to Harikuppa. In the jungle there were left all the people. Peru Naik, Jaganya, Kala and Somla went and brought nine men of Tota Naik's party including Tota Naik. Then near Harikuppa some women and

others were coming in a cart which we attacked and plundered. I was present then. Then we went away towards Muddemkoppa in the Shimoga road. In that road three or four Brahmans were coming along walking. Then a cart and some three horsemen came; also a bullock man: all these men were robbed, and we went away into the jungles towards Kumsi. There we stopped for mid-day in the jungle and Tota Naik brought news of the risal (treasure) cart. We all went there, surrounded and attacked the cart and plundered the contents. We found the risal money in it, which we carried away towards Shicarpur. Thence we went to Bommanahalli in the Dharwar district. There we had our cattle on which we carried rice. We concealed the money in rice bags and went away to Surapur. There we united with the other tandas and were all together. The plunder was then distributed and the money was paid away according to each man's share; each man got 300 rupees. Valya and Tuljya took a hundred rupees more than others. These tandas were separated at Sapur near Surapur. There were many people in all the three tandas. We thought people's alarm will be raised and attention directed to our number. So we separated. Peru Naik's tanda went away on one side and the other two tandas of Valu and Hema went on the other. Tota Naik turned away from Shicarpur. There we stopped away and the Sircar people seized us there. This is all my story. We were brought thence to Shimoga, and I am here. Tota Naik, his son Oamla, Jatrya, his sons Kanya and Anandya, Bhogya Chinya, Hutchya

Sandya were the men of Tota Naik's party who joined us from Mulnad. These were not present when the three Brahmans were killed, but joined us after and were present during the treasure dacoities. Of the prisoners in court, none are of my tanda, that is to say of Peru Naik's. Dongriya, Mattraya, Bada Somla, Hemla, Jesya, Kumya, Jurla, Hari, Naik, Hama belong to Valu Naik's tanda and Valu Naik is himself the 12th prisoner. All these were present with us during our raids—some were going for some and others for others, but all and every one was taking part in the dacoities and living from the plunder which we used to get. Valu Naik was with us also. He does not go out himself to commit robberies, but stays at home. When the treasure dacoity took place we had left him near Surapur or Golluck Mundrigi. When our tandas were in this country we used to remain in the tandas. He is the Naik of the tanda, and as such the head. He would himself take a share in all the spoil, send out his men, give directions for the commission of robberies and concerting such measures. Of Hema Naik's tanda, there are Bada Balya, Ramdoss, Bhikya, Ratnya, Tuljya, Jayaram, Lakky, Ramuda, Kalya, Pekya, C. Somla and Bhojia not in court. When we first came into Mysore and joined Hema Naik's tanda, all these men were there. All these men had come again with us from Surapur when we committed dacoities in Mulnad. When we were all in Surapur when the distribution took place, all these men were there and took their shares. But the mad fellow Ramedu had not taken his. In fact



he did not take part in any of the dacoities. When we of the three tandas had been united for these raids, this Ramedu was neither taking part in the robberies nor taking shares in the plunder. He used to beg from door to door and live on alms. But he used to be in the tanda. He is a brother of Tuljya and Ramadas, but he was not living with them. Near Bhalappana Kanave about 15 or 20 cartmen were beaten. It was a party returning or going towards Chitaldroog. It was about daybreak when these were attacked. I do not know what the carts contained. Near Arsmangundi also we attacked and plundered 10 or 12 carts. In the former we did not get much money; we got about 150 rupees. We got also some other clothes, &c. In the other we got about 300 rupees. Near Kanakutti it was all a pedestrian party going to markets. Near Najpuri in Tirupulli hills we plundered cartmen. Only a little money was found, but we got about ten seers of silver and three seers of gold. It was dark when we committed this, and I cannot say whether there were any women in the party. Near Doodda another pedestrian party, or rather two or three parties returning from the bazaar, were beaten and plundered. There an Anche runner was stopped. As he said he was Government servant we let him go. He was going to Tiptur. Pera was present and he had a gun and kodle when the three Brahmins were killed near Naji Bhagi Pala. Pera took part in it and struck them dead. None of those Brahmins recognized Pera Naik. I was sick in Shicarpur, and in fact had gone away to Hema Naik's

tanda in Raidrug. I do not know if my brother Pera Naik was going to cutcherry in that dhobies' dacoity. It was in Raidrug that I had heard that my brother Lalla and my nephew Beemla had been imprisoned. When we came to Ulleverthi from Bharamsagar and before that Hema Naik had come over to us at Handvadi. We were giving him a share in the spoil and he took his share of all the dacoities. When we were in Ulleverthi he had come on two or three occasions. In such Chor tandas Naiks take two shares, while the others take only one. They are the leaders and big men and have to be watchful of both the good and evil from the Sircar people. This is the recognized usage. All these three Naiks, viz., Peru Naik, Valu Naik and Hema Naik, used to receive two shares from the very commencement. Hema Naik's people were with us, and it is our custom that this big Naik also should be given his share wherever he might be. Hema Naik received 900 rupees in connection with the treasury remittance. He got it in Surapur. Cheta Somla was in Pera Naik's house. He is a near relation of Hema Naik, being his nephew, and after he left Pera Naik, he joined his own uncle Hema Naik. Bhoja was with Bhann and he joined us after a few of our party had been imprisoned in connection with the dhobi dacoity near Shicarpur."

## CHAPTER VI.

## KORAVARS—KORACHAS—ERUKALAS.

KORAVARS as they are called in the southern districts of the presidency, or Korachas (Korchavandlu) or Erukalas (Yerukalavandlu) in the Telugu districts, are essentially a criminal race adopting dacoity, highway robbery, and burglary as a hereditary profession; and it may be safely averred that in no class is crime of this nature more systematically carried out.

The word "Korava" is derived from the Tamil *கூரம்* (kuram) meaning palmistry or powers of divination, fortune telling. The Telugu word Erukala is derived from "Erugu" having an identical meaning.\*

\* There can be no doubt as to the fact that Yerukalas are a Tamil tribe, but there are some points connected with the name and language which seem to throw further light on the question. The name has two forms in Telugu—one, Yerukuvandlu, said by Brown and Campbell to be derived from "Erugu," to know, and to have reference to their fortune-telling powers, and one Yerukalavandlu; the first part of this word is evidently not a plural of "Yeruku," but a distinct word. This seems to be recognized by Brown and Wilson, who conjecture that "Yeru" is a prefix to be connected with the word "Erra," red. Wilson has the following remarks in his glossary:—"Yerukulavar (?) Tamil probably for Erukuvadu, plural Erukuvandlu, and the same as those corruptly termed Yerkelwanloo, Yerakedi, Yerukalloo (యెరకల వంశం) . . ."

They are said to be called Koorshevanloo, Yerkelvanlu, Yerukedi and Yerakelloo, but to be known among themselves as "Kurra." They are possibly the same who appear among the practical slaves in Kurg under the name of "Yerravanroo," i.e., Erravandlu (?) red men, or Yevaru, or Yerlan or Yeraklen (?); also specified among the servile races of Kurg. The

This tribe seems to be allied to the Kykarees of the Deccan and Central Provinces, whose habits and customs are identical.†

The following are the divisions and sub-divisions of the Koravar class :—

*Main Division.*

A.	B.	C.	D.
Uppu Koravar— உப்பு, salt.	i. Kavalkara Koravar— காவற்காரர், watchmen.	i. Thubbai Koravar—தலை, bam- boo plants.	i. Putchaykoo- thee Koravars— பச்சைசூத்தி, tattoo.
Karuvai pillai Ko- avar—கருவேப்பிலை ர குருவேம்பு, a ragrant leaf to flavour curries, <i>Bergeria konigii</i> ."		ii. Poonaykoo- thee Kcravar— பூனைசூத்தி, cat- killers. iii. Koonjil Ko- ravar—குஞ்சில் (குஞ்சம்), a fan	ii. Koodaykutti Koravar— கூடைகட்டி, basket-making.

Yerukalas in this district (Nellore) state that their tribe name is "Kurru," also "Kolu"; and I think there can be no doubt that the "yer" or "yeru" is a mere prefix and that "Kala," Wilson's "Kullevar," represents the real name of the tribe. To connect "yer" or "yeru" with the Telugu "erra," red, seems quite meaningless; it might perhaps be compared with "Yervaru" mentioned by Wilson, or which seems more plausible to suppose to be the word "Yeruku" (which, as has been said, is one designation of the tribe in Telugu) compounded with the real tribe name "Kurruvandlu" or "Kolavandlu," when according to a common euphonic law in Telugu the two "k's" would coalesce and the word become Yerukkalavandlu. The second "k" would easily be dropped and the word assume its common form "Yerukalavandlu." I have been unable to find that there are any traditions among these people as to the country from which they came: one of them indignantly repudiated the notion of a Tamil origin. The language, however, and the tribe name "Kurra" seem to me unmistakably to point to the identity of this tribe with the well known Kuravar or Koravar of all the Tamil districts . . . (Mr. Boswell's *Manual of the Nellore District*.)

† See Major Gunthorpe's *Notes on Criminal Tribes*.

*Sub-Divisions.*

A.	B.	C.	D.
i. Kavádi—காவடி. காவடி, pole carrier on the shculders with offerings for a temple.	Kavádi ..	Kavádi ..	Kavádi.
ii. Wooyaloo—உய்- யடலு-ணஞ்சல், a swing.			
iii. Manebády—மேன் பாடி-மேன்பாடு, nobility; fit persons to sing before the gods.	Manebády..	Manebády ..	Manebády.
iv. Manrikutti— மேன்றிருத்தி, ashoe.	Manrikutti.	Manrikutti ..	Manrikutti.
v. Sathupádi—சாத்- துபாடி, flowers, jewels and vest- ments to adorn an idol.	Sathupádi ..	Sathupádi ..	Sathupádi.
vi. Bandy—பண்டி, cart; car.			

This classification of the Korava clans was adopted by Mr. Stevenson, a District Superintendent of Police, who gave much study to these people. Offshoots of the tribe, calling themselves Ena or Thogamalai Koravars, Jathí Pillai Koravars and Pile-curing Koravars, are confined to the more southern districts. Numbers of the Koravar class have become educated and respectable members of society; they call themselves Balijas or Naidoos and forsake their clans.

The Kavádi and Wooyaloo clans do not intermarry, nor do the members of the other four clans, viz., Mane-

bády, Manrikutti, Sathupádi and Bandy, but they may marry into the Kavádi and Wooyaloo clans.

They belong to the Satáni or mixed class, and are said by Manu to take their origin from a Vaisya and a Brahmin or Ktshatria woman.

The origin of the names of the sub-divisions is said to be—

Kávadi—because they carry offerings to Perumalswami at Tirupati, carried on a pole.

Wooyaloo—because they swing their offerings before the god Perumal.

Manchády—because they are deemed fit persons to sing before the god.

Manrikutti—because they offer shoes to Perumal (a Hindu custom).

Sathupádi—because their chief ceremony is adorning the gods with jewels, flowers and vestments.

Bandy—because they assist at car feasts and drag the cars.

These occupations are, however, purely legendary.

Their language is one peculiar to themselves, and seems to be distinctly of a Tamil origin,—they are, however, conversant with Tamil, Telugu and Canarese, which is spoken according to the locality they favour. A peculiarity in their speech is the manner in which they clip their words; they have slang expressions also which are perfectly unintelligible to the uninitiated.

The Uppu, Kurruvaipillai, Thubbai, Putchaykoothee and Koodaykutti Koravars are the worst classes,

and are true wandering tribes, infesting all parts of the presidency.\*

Their habitations or gudisays are of two sorts: when in permanent settlements, they have the low round huts roofed with palmyra leaves plaited with nine strands, the entrance being half closed (*vide* plate II); these are seldom moved and hence the term "semi-permanent" is applied to them by the police; and when on the march they use small pâls or tents called "Bishakolu gudisay," (frontispiece) which they move with their household gods on the backs of asses. Their encampments are invariably

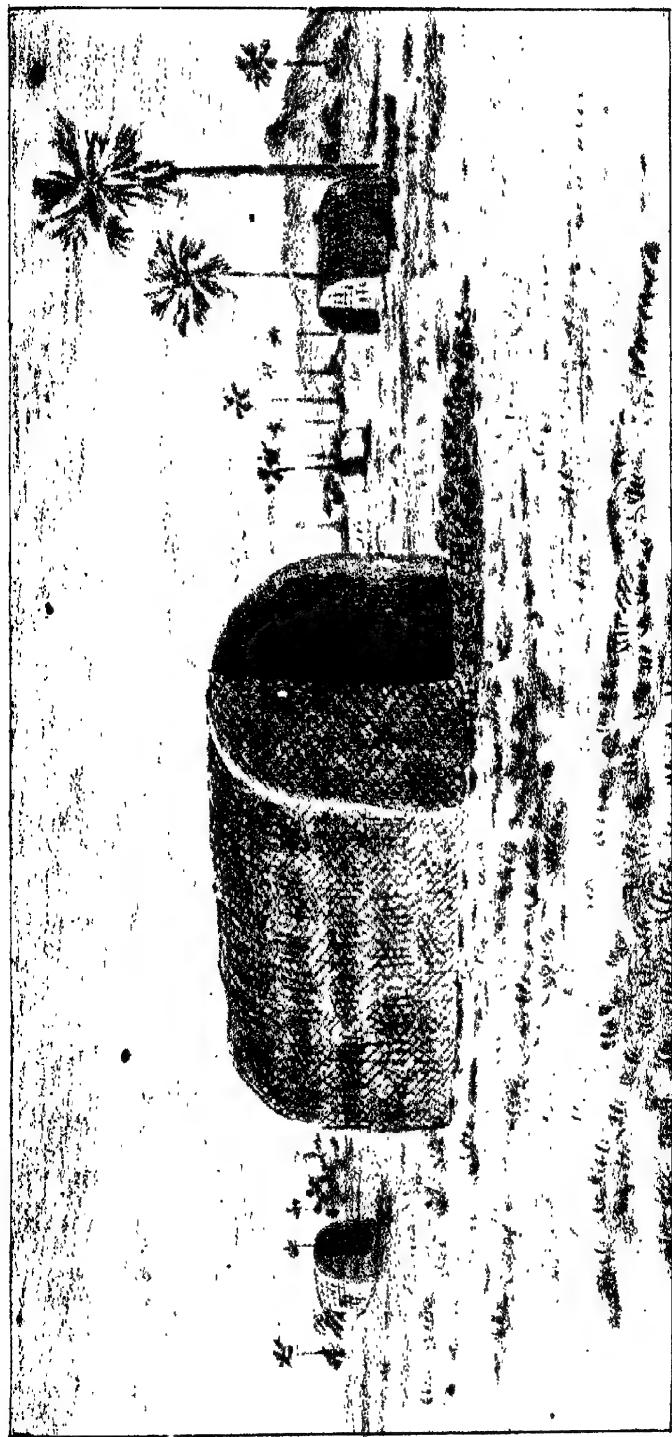
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\* The vagrants called Koravars are divided into three branches. One of these is chiefly engaged in the traffic of salt, for which they go in bands to the coasts to procure and carry it to the interior of the country on the backs of asses, which they have in great droves; and when they have disposed of their cargoes, they reload the beasts with the sort of grain in greatest request on the coast; to which they return without loss of time. Thus their whole lives are spent in transit, without a place of settlement in any part of the land.

The trade of another branch of the Koravars is the manufacture of osier panniers, wicker baskets and other household utensils of that sort, or bamboo mats. This class, like the preceding, are compelled to traverse the whole country, from place to place, in quest of employment. All of them live under little tents, constructed of woven bamboos, 3 feet high, 4 or 5 broad, and 5 or 6 in length, in which they squat, man, wife and children, and shelter themselves from the weather.

These vagabonds never think of saving anything for future wants, but spend every day all they earn, and sometimes more. They must, therefore, live in grievous poverty; and, when their work fails them, they have no resource but in begging alms.

The third species of Koravars is generally known under the name of "Kallā-Bantru" or robbers; and indeed those who compose this caste are generally thieves or sharpers by profession and right of birth. The distinction of expertness in filching belongs to this tribe, the individuals of which it consists having been trained to knavery from their infancy. They are instructed in no other learning, and the only art they communicate to their children is that of stealing adroitly; unless we except that of being prepared with a sound lie, and with a determined resolution to endure every sort of torture rather than to confess the robberies which are laid to their charge.



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KORAVAR (ERUKALA) HUTS IN A SEMI-PERMANENT ENCAMPMENT.

LITHO. SURVEY OFFICE, MADRAS 1892





on the outskirts of villages, dry rocky uplands being usually selected; women and children are always to be seen with the gangs.

The Salt and Kuruvaipillai Koravars were, before the days of the railway, the salt merchants of Southern India, but undoubtedly went in largely for serious depredations, and were the terror of the villagers. This trade has, of necessity, suffered as the network of railways has spread over the country, but among some of the gangs their ancient calling is still adhered to, and salt is brought from the coast factories to inland villages and exchanged for grain, which is conveyed to the coast and sold.

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Far from being ashamed of their infamous profession, they openly glory in it; and when they have nothing to fear, they publicly boast, with the greatest complacency, of the dexterous robberies they have committed at various times during their career. Some who have been caught and wounded in the act, or have had their nose and ears, or perhaps their hand, cut off for the offence, exhibit their loss with ostentation as a mark of their intrepidity; and these are the men who are generally chosen to be the chiefs of the caste.

It is commonly in the dead of the night that they commit their depredations. Then they enter the villages silently, leaving sentinels at the avenues, while others seek out the houses that may be attacked with the least danger of detection, and so make good their entry and pillage them. This they effect without attempting to force open the door, which would be a noisy operation; but by quietly cutting through the mud wall with a sharp instrument so as to make an opening sufficiently large to pass through. The Kalla-Bantru are so expert in their species of robbery that in less than half an hour they will carry off a rich lading of plunder without being heard or suspected till day-light discloses the villainy.

The Muhammadan princes have always in their service a great number of Kalla-Bantru, whom they employ in their calling, which is that of plundering for their masters' profit. The last Mussulman prince who reigned in Mysore had a regular battalion of them on service in time of war, not for the purpose of fighting in the field, but to prowl and infest the enemy's camp at night, stealing away the horses and other necessities of the officers, spiking the cannon and acting as spies. They were rewarded in proportion to the dexterity they displayed in these achievements; and in time of peace they were despatched into the various states of neighbouring princes to rob for the benefit of their masters, besides discharging their ordinary duty of spies.—(Abbé Dubois' *People of India*, pages 236, 237.)

Each gang or tanda has a headman or Naik, who is selected by lot; he is held in great respect, and the men will do much to save him, going to the length even of confessing to a crime that he may be guilty of. His word is law, and his authority absolute. Should the Naik fall ill crime will not be committed for a season: an acting Naik, one who by reason of his daring and skill, is selected, and he gets a headman's share; the real leader, however, though taking no part in their adventures, gets his full share of spoil. Should a Naik be unfortunate and get imprisoned, a smart man is chosen to act till the old leader returns to his devoted followers. On the death of a leader the most expert of the gang is appointed to the vacancy. It is the duty of the Naik to use every endeavour to obtain the release of one of his gang in the event of any of them getting into trouble, and contributions are demanded from each member of the gang. Koravars generally, when going to commit a dacoity, indulge in a good deal of preparations. They meet at a nîm tree where a symbol dedicated to "Perumal" is erected, and offer up to it gold coins obtained after a series of successful expeditions. It is important to note that Koravars always convert their spoil into sovereigns. Copious libations of toddy and arrack are then indulged in and cocoanuts broken at the shrine of "Perumal" and the omens are considered; the Naik decides whether they are favourable or not. They ascribe great importance to these signs; a few instances may be given:—

(1) If a lizard chirps in front of them, on the right side, or above them, it is lucky; if on other sides, it is unlucky.

(2) If, when starting, one of their number sneezes once, it is unlucky; if oftener, lucky.

(3) If, also, at the time of starting, they see a snake, it is lucky; but if it goes into a hole, it is unlucky. A dead snake is considered a most unpropitious sign.

If all goes well, and "Perumalswami" assures them they will meet with success, they start and make forced marches, going considerable distances, sometimes as much as 30 miles in a night. They arm themselves with stout bamboos, slings, billhooks, spears and occasionally old rusty guns.

Highway dacoity on parties returning from weekly markets is a very favourite mode of crime; one of the gang goes to the cart-stand disguised as a Palli, a respectable ryot, and ascertains who are journeying and what there is to be plundered. He travels with the carts to the place where his comrades have met, gives the sign before agreed on, and the attack is made: the "Palli" who is usually the Naik of the gang or a smart observant man, makes himself scarce to throw off suspicion. Force is used should the slightest resistance be offered, and not unfrequently the violence is such as to end in murder. In torchlight dacoities the violence is always very great; watchmen are attacked and killed, and women treated in a most ruthless manner: in such cases the gang is usually from 20 to 50 men,

and a local jeweller or peculant Komati is the originator of the venture. Women frequently give the required information ; under the pretext of selling their " kurruvaipillai " leaves and other commodities or telling fortunes, they collect the desired information in their wanderings and impart the knowledge thus obtained to the men : the attack will probably be postponed till the gang has moved many miles from the village, and committed only when their presence in the village is forgotten.

Koravars are intimately acquainted with the local limits of police stations and jurisdiction of districts ; encamping on the borders of one district they go long distances into the adjoining district and recross the border to their encampment with great rapidity. In this manner they are frequently able to prove *alibis*, and local headmen of villages where semi-permanent Koravar gangs have settled are very prone to assist them with their testimony to support the *alibi*.

Their *aliases* are numerous ; they give one to the police, one to the committing magistrate and another to the Sessions Judge. It is quite impossible to trace them by their names, and, except by identification, it is difficult to prove previous convictions against them. The connectionship or relationship between Koravar gangs is remarkable ; nearly all the notorious criminal gangs of Koravars throughout the districts of North and South Arcot, Cuddapah, Salem and Nellore have been shown by means of the gang registers to be in some degree related, and it is a

remarkable and interesting fact that members of these gangs have a common rendezvous, and periodically meet. The reason given by them for these wanderings is that they go for the purpose of collecting "kurruvaipillai" leaves; this, however, *can* only be an ostensible reason, for the profits to be derived from the sale of this commodity are so small that they could not possibly subsist upon this alone. These meetings then can only be ascribed as a means of obtaining and imparting information to each other, and in this manner a system of free masonry is kept up. It is also a noteworthy fact that members of different clans or gotrams, who in other matters have nothing in common with each other, unite in the commission of crime, and by the time the offence is reported to the nearest police station, the parties concerned have separated and the property disposed of at one of the large centres.

As housebreakers Koravars are especially expert, and burglary is usually committed in the following manner : the old men of the gang and the women are told off by the Naik to collect information in outlying villages ; they take their commodities, which I will detail later, and after several days' wanderings return to the tanda, having collected sufficient information to keep the gang employed. This is then communicated to the Naik, who invokes "Perumal" to know if all is well, and then men are detailed off in parties of from 3 to 5. Some are usually left in the camp. Armed with sticks (bamboos), and should the distance be great taking a store of cooked food

with them, they start on their various enterprises, timing their arrival at their destinations between 10 p.m. and midnight. The instrument used is called the "*silloo kolú*" or "*gádi kolú*"! it is an iron implement steel tipped and pointed at both ends, one end fitting into a handle; it varies in length, averaging about a foot long. This instrument is always offered by the Naik to "Perumal" before the party sets out, and his aid is invoked for the success of the undertaking. The breach in the wall is usually made on a level with the latch or bolt of the door, and, like the Gudu Dasari Alagiries, they are always careful to leave a free exit from the house; burnt matches are also frequently found both inside and outside of the house. Preparations are made for defence in the event of an attack, and if they are surprised or their retreat is cut off, they always show fight; thus these gang burglaries frequently devolve themselves into house dacoities. A heap of stones collected usually in the backyards invariably points to Koravars. Grain, brass vessels and jewels are carried away; but sleeping inmates of the houses they never touch.

Their code of rules for division of stolen property may be considered just. The headman of the gang gets two shares, each of the others partaking in the venture getting one share; the wives of comrades in jail get  $\frac{1}{2}$  a share; the old men and those who remain behind to look after the huts and personate those who have gone out to commit crime get  $\frac{1}{4}$  share each, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the whole lot is set aside for a general drink and jubilation, when "Perumal" is

again worshipped. Except in caste disputes and the like Koravars seldom implicate another; but should such be the case, or one member of the clan be convicted upon false information given by another, the informer, or if he be dead, his children and grandchildren have to give up all in their possession to the unfortunate one on his return from jail.

Confessions by Koravars are very rare, and if made are invariably retracted before the court or the magistrate trying the case. They appear to be well acquainted with the requirements of the law relating to confessions.

The old men and women of the Uppu, Kurruvaipillai, Kavalkara and Thubbai Koravars especially employ their time in making the following articles :

- (1) Date mats.
- (2) Twine and rope from various jungle fibres.
- (3) Rope nets, called uri (உரி) used by natives to keep pots containing ghee, milk, oil and the like; they are usually suspended from the roof.
- (4) Bamboo rattles.
- (5) Ropes used by natives to hang cloths called கொடிக்கயறு (kodikairu).
- (6) Ropes for drawing water or tethering cattle called தாம்புக்கயறு (tambukairu).
- (7) Cradle ropes called உணை (unai).
- (8) Wisps of straw to be put under pots called புரிமணை (purimanai).
- (9) Pads for the head to carry weights or pots of water called சும்மாடு (summadu).
- (10) Plates made of cowries.



(11) Edible roots called சுக்காண்ட (karakai), viz.,

(i) *Flacourtia sepiaria*,

(ii) *Carissa carandas*,

(iii) *Carissa diffusa*;

also சுக்காண்டாய் (sukkankai) a species of *Boyonia*, which are useful in cases of fever.

These commodities they hawk about from village to village and so pick up the information, which is turned account by the able-bodied men of the gang; the profits to be derived from the sale of these commodities are so small that they could not subsist on them, and as few of the nomad Koravars have any other ostensible means of livelihood, crime alone can be considered to be their real occupation, and experience shows that they are worthy of taking a very prominent position among the criminals of Southern India.

Many of the Kavalkara class are employed as watchers of topes, and a few may be found in the ranks of the Police and Salt Departments; but they rarely turn out well. Those employed as tope watchers are frequently a useful source of information to their kinsmen, and in many places the pernicious system of "Kudi Kaval," or in other words "black mail" prevails. Those who employ the "Kavalkara Koravan" enjoy a sense of security from having their property stolen; but happily this system among Koravars is not practised to the extent to which it obtains among the Kallars and Maravars of the more southern districts.

Should a Koravar suspect another of having committed a crime, and he deny it, several persons take

new pots, put rice and water in them and place them on the fire; whosoever's rice boils first has not committed the offence, but the owner of the second pot which boils is deemed the guilty one and he has to pay all the expenses. If two pots boil at the same time, they resort to trial by ordeal; a new pot is filled with boiling ghee with a four-anna piece in it and the suspected person is told to take it out: if he is innocent he will at once offer to do so; but if guilty so great is their superstition, he will at once confess. These trials are frequently resorted to by the Koravars, and it is surprising how skilfully, by these tests, a Koravar will find out who is guilty.

The causes of their quarrels are an important guide in the investigation of crime:—

When a marriage is agreed upon the parents of the bridegroom elect *promise* to pay the bride's people 20 pagodas; but this is seldom carried out: and if, without the authority of the Naik, the bridegroom or his people succeed in any enterprise, the payment is demanded, this is invariably refused and quarrel arises.

Division of property frequently causes heartburnings.

As before stated, nearly all the gangs are related in some degree or another, and they frequently change from gang to gang, taking fresh *aliases*. The causes of these changes are quarrels about women or dissatisfaction with the Naik; and, as the restriction regarding implicating a fellow Koravar is confined to the tanda or gang to which the men belong, they

have no hesitation in betraying a member of another *tanda* with which they may have belonged and left on account of disputes.

In this way, with careful questioning, much useful information may be obtained.

Stolen property is disposed of as soon as they can get a suitable remuneration. The general bargain is one rupee for a rupee's weight of gold. They do not, however, as a rule, lose much over their transactions, and invariably convert their surplus into sovereigns. In searching a Koravar encampment on one occasion the writer had the good fortune to discover a number of sovereigns which, for safe keeping, were stitched in the folds of their pack saddles. Undisposed of property, which has been buried, is brought to the encampment at nightfall and taken back and reburied before dawn. The ground round the pegs to which their asses are tethered, in heaps of ashes or filth are favourite places for burying plunder. Women are adepts in secreting jewels about their person, and, on the advent of the police officer at the camp, they hurry off on the pretence of fetching water and carry the stolen property in their water pots and bury it. They are also very quick in burying property under the spot they may be squatting. But they have many means for disposing of property, and it is quite the exception to find spoil in their encampments; their intercommunication with other gangs is too systematic, and the network of railways throughout the country affords them ample opportunities of disposing of property even before a crime is reported.

As a class they are easily identified. The women wear necklaces of shells and cowries interspersed with beads of all colours in several rows hanging low down on the bosom ; brass bangles of various shapes from the wrist to the elbow ; brass, lead and silver rings, very roughly made, on all their fingers except the middle ones.

The cloth peculiar to Koravar women is a coarse black one ; but they are as a rule not particular as to this, and wear stolen cloths after removing the borders and all marks of identification. They also wear the "chola," which is fastened across the bosom, and not like the Lumbádies at the back.

The men are dirty, unkempt looking objects, wear their hair long and usually tied in a knot on the top of the heads, and indulge in little finery. A "joochi" or cloth round the loins and a bag called the "vadi sanchi" made of striped cloth completes their toilet.

They are an uncivilized class with strange customs regarding the sexes, selling or pledging their wives and unmarried daughters, taking them back upon redemption of the pledge with any children born in the interval and treating them as though nothing peculiar had happened. When any male is sentenced to imprisonment, the wife selects another partner for the period of her husband's absence, going back to him on his release with all her children.

Polygamy is practised among them and the number of wives is only limited by the means of the husband. Females are married on reaching maturity. The marriage ceremony usually begins on a Sunday.

When one of the class wishes to get married, he goes to the hut of the woman he wishes to marry, accompanied by his friends, taking one or two two-anna pieces and some betel. The Naik is then consulted, and if he favour the match, they perform sacrifices to Perumal or Venkatêsvara (to whom Tirupati temple is sacred). This is usually on a Saturday, and the bridegroom's party promises to pay 20 pagodas for the girl. (This promise, as before stated, is seldom fulfilled and is a frequent cause of quarrels among them.) Two pots are then placed before the huts of the bride and bridegroom and some raw rice is put in a bell-metal bowl ; on this bowl they place a brass pot and then a cocoanut : camphor or incense is then burnt. The women in attendance sing a monotonous chant while the incense is burning, and the bridegroom ties the tali made of black beads and the ceremony is complete. It usually lasts one day, but if there be funds available, the gang give themselves up to feasting and merry-making for three days or longer.

Widow re-marriage is freely allowed. Marriage of relations within the degree of first cousins is against their rules, but an exception is made in the case of a man marrying the daughter of his father's sister ; not only is this allowed, but a custom prevails that the first two daughters of a family may be claimed by the maternal uncle as wives for his sons. I have said that the price of a wife is 20 pagodas : the maternal uncle's right to the two first daughters is valued at 8 pagodas, and is enforced in this way : if he urges his preferential claim and marries his own sons to his nieces,

he pays for each only 12 pagodas ; and similarly if he, not having sons or from other cause, forego his claim, he receives 8 of the 20 pagodas paid to the girl's parents by any one else whom she may marry.

. The first wife only, however, costs 20 pagodas : the price of subsequent ones being 2, and sometimes less. The money is not paid in cash, nor, as before stated, at the time of marriage. Agreements are made and asses are the consideration which usually passes. No documents are exchanged, and the contracts are seldom carried out.

In each of the gangs there are usually many distinct families or gotrams. Each has its family name, such as Bandi, Kavadi, &c. The system of undivided families prevails, but the tie is very loose : any member of an undivided family of brothers may claim partition of all the property at any time and may separate himself from the others. If a son wishes to leave his father's family he may do so, and the father may or may not give him a share of the property as he chooses. If he refuse, the son has no remedy during his father's lifetime, but after his death he may claim a share. He does this by assembling a number of the patriarchs of the tribe and stating his case before them ; they may adjudge his share to him and enforce their decree by declaring the defendant an outcast, that is to say, by making him keep a distance from the tribe, refusing him fire and water, and denying him the right of marriage among the tribe. If he afterwards submit, he is admitted as a friend and a brother. A man supports all his children by all his

wives ; if he has a great number, his brothers will assist in bringing them up, but when they are grown up they return to their father's family. Sons so reared will, by reason of gratitude or social custom, support their uncles in their old age.

On a man's death his property passes to his sons ; if he has no sons or wife, the brothers inherit ; if his sons be minors, the wife and brothers enjoy the property and support the children. Should the brothers refuse to do so, the sons shift for themselves and claim the property before the " elders " of the community when they have grown up.

In collecting these punchayets of " elders," the plaintiff must give each of them a feed of rice.

A peculiarity in Koravar funeral ceremonies is the significance given to the feeding of crows : this is done on the fifth or last day of the ceremony, and is accounted for by the prominent part the crow takes in their omens for weal or woe. They bury their dead, and cremation is not practised.

*Kavilgar (or Kavalkara) Koravars.*

Kavilgar (or Kavalkara) Koravars are of four classes (*vide table*). The first (Kavadi) are looked upon as uncles to the other three. Some talk Tamil and others a dialect of Telugu called " Morasa " from " Marasú," a drum. The latter do not intermarry. They do not as a rule wander, but settle in the outskirts of villages in four or five families ; they guard (or are said to guard) two or three villages and the headmen of the settlements levy taxes on the

villagers, called mérai (மேரை). These taxes consist of a small portion of grain, a sheep every year from each flock, and at marriages and festive occasions a cloth. Should a villager refuse to give them these taxes, or rather black mail, he is sure to suffer: his property is stolen by a neighbouring Kavilgar Koravar. Villagers encourage these people to settle among them; but this system is dying out, as it is strenuously opposed by district officers.

Dacoity is committed by this class of Koravars occasionally; but in such cases they are usually employed by an enemy of the victim, or a peculant goldsmith. Burglary and sheep thefts are their favourite crimes, and it is difficult to bring a case home to them, for they can nearly always prove an *alibi* by means of the inhabitants of the village to which they belong.

In committing burglary they use an implement similar to that used by the other Korava classes, and the breach in the wall is usually near the foundation. Tiles or thatch is often removed and entrance thus afforded. Free exit is first made and sand is thrown forward to ascertain if the inmates are asleep. Only one man enters the house; his confreres are outside to receive the plunder: all useless property is discarded: the cash is at once divided, but the jewels and other valuables buried or disposed of to speculative village headmen. Property of an identifiable nature is never kept in their huts.

As a class, the Kavilgar Koravar is not as hardy



a criminal as his itinerant kinsfolk but far more civilized.

Endeavours have been made to induce the nomad Koravars to settle and engage in honest pursuits; but as yet the experiments tried at Gudiyatam and Tirutani of the North Arcot district have not met with success. They prefer their wandering life to any advantages they may derive as respectable citizens, and as few are even in the smallest degree educated, it will be a very long time before they can be persuaded to give up their criminal habits which are ingrained in them from early youth. Education may produce the desired effect, but *per contra* may convert the Korava of to-day into a more enlightened rogue.

## CHAPTER VII.

## KORAVARS—(cont.).

THE *Ena* or *Thogamalai* Koravars, also called *Solia Pallans*, belong to the *Putchaykoothee* or tattooing class of Koravars (*vide table*), but have separated from the main division, and allied themselves with the *Capemari Alagiries*, adopting many of their manners and customs and assuming similar disguises.

The original head-quarters of this class was *Ediapatti* near *Thogamalai* in the *Kulitalai taluk* of the *Trichinopoly* district, but they have now settled in small gangs in various places, viz., *Sallimadai* and *Melakuttiampaukam* of *Palghat taluk* in the *Malabar* district, *Penjipuram* and *Rasakudi* near *Karikal*, *Otticanchoilai* near *Pondicherry*, and also with the gangs of *Capemaries* of *Trivellore* and *Málur*.

Like the *Capemari Alagiries*, the *Thogamalai Koravars* are essentially pickpockets and thieves, wandering over the country; they attend all the fairs and festivals at which they reap a rich harvest, and especially use the railway as a means of locomotion. They are also accomplished house-breakers, and, as a rule, obtain their information from their women who go about tattooing females. The breach is invariably *under* the door frame, and jewels are taken from sleeping women and children. They

call themselves "Seraigarans" and "Poliagarans" in the Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts, and many of the class have settled, possess houses and lands, and pass themselves off as eminently respectable ryots: this is, however, only a blind, as in the case of the Capemari Alagaries.

Their language is a corrupt Tamil, but Telugu, Canarese, and Malayalam is also spoken with a peculiar tribal accent. Like other criminal classes, they have their own slang, for instance—

"Thapigadu = a receiver.

Gotrein or vacapadi = a housebreaking implement.

Donku = a hole.

Kapa n = a constable."

Stolen property quickly changes hands; they have their receivers all over the country, but put most trust in the Natookottai Chetties, who reap rich harvests from their dealings with these people.

The women work independently of the men and are adepts in the art of concealing property on their persons.

Their marriage and other customs are like those of the other Koravar classes. The headman or "Natamkar" of each gang exercises absolute jurisdiction in caste disputes, divorces and the like. Their household goddess is "Anjelammal," and a temple dedicated to this goddess at Sholavandân in the Madura district is held in great reverence by them. Pilgrimages to the temple dedicated to Palaniandavan or the Palni Hills are also made.

Demon worship is also observed. "Kanjathadi Karupu" is their chief demon god.

Another class known as the Pile-curing Koravars is to be found in the southern districts.

Pile-curing Koravars are an offshoot of the "Kúdaykutti" or basket-making Koravars, but have now formed themselves into a separate class: their head-quarters is the Patukotai taluk of the Tanjore district; they wander over the country, taking the caste appellations of Moodelly, Pillai, Pusari, &c., in the prosecution of their profession, and have quite forsaken their clan. They are, as a rule, respectably dressed and not unfrequently educated: a few are conversant with English. They are, as a class, not addicted to crime.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DOMARA (DOMBARI—DOMBER).

THE Domara tribe is variously designated as Dombari and Domber, which words are doubtless forms of "Dom," the term by which the very numerous outcast races of Northern India are known. They seem to be allied to the Kolaties and the Bereahs of Central India and the Domras of Bengal. They are a tribe of jugglers and athletes, ropedancers, &c., and are scattered more or less over Southern India.

They are divided into two classes, viz., the Reddi Domaras and the Aray Domaras.

The Aray Domara class is also known as the Mahratta Domara from the fact of their language being a form of Mahratti, and though they are to be found in small gangs in the more southern districts of the presidency, they chiefly confine themselves to wanderings in the Ceded Districts, the Nizam's Dominions and the Mysore Province. There is, however, little distinction between the two classes, and their caste customs appear identical. They are said to be allied to the Lumbádies, a statement which perhaps is supported by the legend which tells of Môla, the ancestor of the Lumbádies, as exhibiting his gymnastic feats before the kings; the view is further corroborated by the fact that Lumbádies and Domaras mix freely to this day.

As gymnasts the Domaras are extremely good, both men and women being experts in all manners of feats. The women are proficient in making combs of horn and wood, and also implements used by weavers; these they hawk about from place to place to supplement the profits they derive from their exhibitions of gymnastic feats.

They are, as a class, tall and well made, with a complexion varying from different shades of copper colour to very dark. Dr. Shortt considers that the predominant type of countenance which they exhibit is Mongolian; he speaks of the "——— somewhat pointed chin and absence of whiskers, large eye and prominent cheek bones." In addition to their conjuring tricks, rope-dancing and the like, they hunt, fish, make mats and rear donkeys and pigs.

The head of the tribe is called the "Mutli Gúrú." He is their high priest and exercises supreme jurisdiction over them both in spiritual and temporal matters. His head-quarters is Chitvél, Pullampett taluk of the Cuddapah district. The legend regarding the office of the Mutli Gúrú is as follows:—

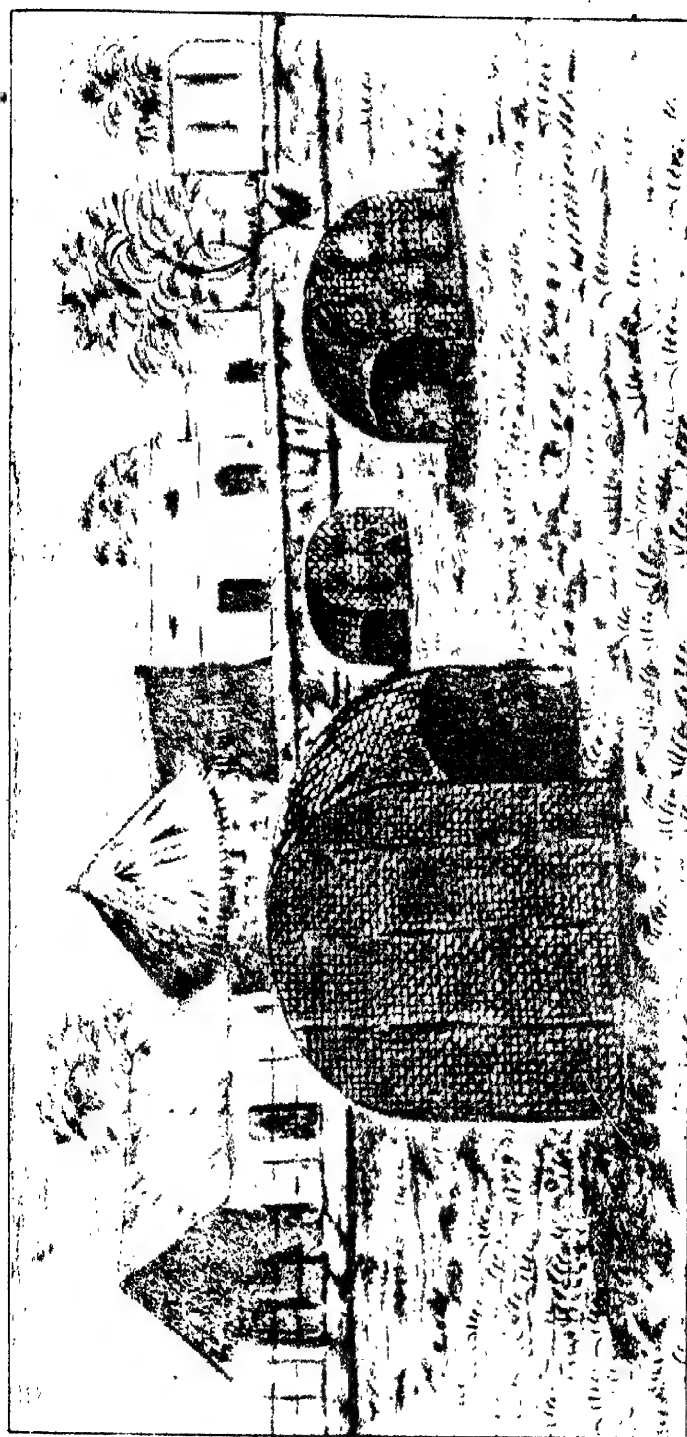
At Chitvél, or as it was then known Mutli, there once lived a king, who called together a gathering of all the gymnasts among his subjects: several classes were represented. "Polerigadu," a Reddi Domara, so pleased the king that he was presented with a ring, and a royal edict was passed that the wearer of the ring and his

descendents should be the head of the Domara class. The ring then given is said to be the same that is now worn by the head of the tribe at Chitvél, which bears an inscription in Telugu declaring that the wearer is the high gúrú or priest of all the Domaras within the four seas. The office is hereditary, and all classes and conditions of Domaras attach great importance to their recognized head and pay tribute to him.

The language of the Reddi Domaras is principally Telugu, that of the Aray Domaras being a form of Mahratta, and, like all criminal classes, they have a slang of their own.

Their dwellings are somewhat similar to those of the Koravars and Joghies, made of palmyra leaves plaited into mats with seven strands (*vide* plate III). The hut may be described thus: two large segments of circles bisecting each other, forming four openings, three of these are closed, while the fourth is a small low entrance which has to be crept into. These huts or gudisays are located on the outskirts of villages and carried on the backs of donkeys when on the march. The Aray or Mahratta Domaras occasionally build for themselves permanent dwellings and settle down, but seldom to honest vocations. In the social scale they are considered to be of a low caste ranking next above Malas (Pariahs) and Madigas (Chucklers): they are allowed into Lumbádi (Sugali), Wudder (Odderu), and Erukala (Koravar) communities.

The women of the tribe are, as a rule, good



DORARA HUTS BELONGING TO THE ARMY CLASS.





looking, and are easily identified by their gay cloths and profusion of brass bangles and necklets of cowries.

The men usually wear short hip trowsers made of a coarse white cloth, and sometimes, after a series of successful forays or at festivals when they give their performances as gymnasts, gaudy shawls, jackets and lace turbans: these are sometimes given to them as presents, but not unfrequently are obtained by less legitimate means. The women are, as a class, notoriously of loose character, and were in former times exclusively the concubines of the poligars: they have, however, of late years, been supplanted and practise their blandishments on the general public chiefly when visiting fairs and festivals. The Domaras are addicted to dacoity, robbery, burglary and thefts of sorts: they are daring and look upon burglary rather as a natural excitement. Information is obtained by the women when going round villages selling their combs and brooms (used by weavers). When all is settled, and the information is considered by the local Mutli gúrú or headman to be satisfactory, "Polariammal" is invoked and her aid solicited on the undertaking. On the night agreed upon the gang assembles and the party is told off; two or three smart men are chosen, accompanied by a youthful aspirant who is being initiated. The instrument used by them is unlike those used by other criminal classes: it is of iron about a foot long and with a chisel-shaped point. The marks of this instrument are

very distinct, and if the breach in the wall is carefully examined, it can be ascertained whether or not Domaras are the operators. The breach is seldom, as in the case of Koravars (Erukalas) and others, made near the bolt of the door, but, as a rule, under the eaves called Vavû (வவ்வு). Jewels worn by sleepers are never touched, but all else is fish for their net, cloths being great attractions. As cattle and sheep lifters they are expert, and have their regular receivers at most of the cattle fairs throughout the presidency.

They are very vindictive; and should they consider themselves ill-treated or slighted at any village they may have visited, or not sufficiently remunerated for their gymnastic feats, they take steps to remunerate themselves at the expense of those who have slighted them. Stolen property is concealed for a time, usually buried at the spot at which their donkeys are tethered: after the hue-and-cry is over, it is disposed of at trading centres to Komaties, goldsmiths or oil-mongers: no individual class can be fixed on as their receivers. Cloths, unless of value, are not, as a rule, sold, but concealed in the packs of their donkeys, and after a time worn; as they are given cloths as presents on occasions when they exhibit their professional performances, they are frequently able to prove *bonâ fide* possession.

Betrothal and marriage ceremonies are most primitive. One of the gang for the nonce is appointed the "Mutli gúrú:" he observes the omens; if they are favourable, the bridegroom elect, ac-

accompanied by some trusted friends of his *tanda* or gang, goes to the bride's house: it is necessary that the contracting parties be of different *gotrams*. The bridegroom then makes his proposal, and if consent is given, provides ample libations of toddy. Four annas worth of betel leaves and nut is then provided by him. Of this, should the priest or his agent be absent, two shares are laid aside for him, while one share is allotted for *Polariammal*, the goddess of the tribe, the remainder or fourth share being for the delectation of the assembled company. No oath or declaration is made. The giving and receiving of betel is the ratification of the contract. The "*voli*" or purchase money, averaging the sum of Rs. 52, is then agreed upon. The marriage takes place at the bridegroom's house usually the day after the betrothal, but sometimes several months elapse before the knot is tied. On the evening of the day fixed for the marriage ceremony to begin, the bride and bridegroom are made to undergo the oiling ceremony; they are then bathed and food is provided; next morning a carpet is spread, on which two planks are laid, one on the east side and the other on the west: the bride sits on the former and the bridegroom on the latter: between them is placed a plate containing rice called "*Tola Bottu*" and five toe rings. The bridegroom then proceeds to tie the *tali*: the bride then puts one of the toe rings on her husband's second toe on the right foot, and a married woman of the tribe puts the remaining four rings

on the bride's toes. A talisman composed of wool-len and cotton thread interwoven, to which is attached a piece of saffron and a betel leaf folded eight times, is then tied by the bridegroom to his bride's right wrist, and also by the bride to her husband's wrist: these are removed the third day, and, on the evening of that day, the "Nagelu" ceremony is performed, *i.e.*, the bride and bridegroom go to an ant-hill which is supposed to be the abode of a cobra and sprinkle the ant-hill with pounded rice. The ceremonies which are numerous usually take five days to complete.

Infant marriage is not practised; widow re-marriage is freely allowed, and polygamy is common, but the relation between the sexes is very lax.

Women of other classes are admitted to the tribe, and the offspring are considered pure Domaras.

Their dead are buried and never cremated.

Caste disputes are settled by a punchayet presided over by the local headman, and trivial offences are adjudicated by him: in the event of its being necessary to excommunicate from the caste, the power rests with the Mutli gúrú of Chitvél alone, when the parties are represented and the case laid before the "supreme court," which "sits" about once in three years; so at least it is said.

Their treatment of women is peculiar. From early infancy they are trained in the mysteries of rope-dancing, tumbling and the like: those who prove themselves adepts are reserved for prostitution for the general benefit of the gang, while

those who are unable to successfully complete their training are reserved for marriage !

Domaras profess to be Vaishnavites, and not unfrequently wear the trident mark on the forehead ; but they are demonologists practically, worshipping Guruppa (the deity of the Margosa tree), Polari-ammal and Mariammal.

## CHAPTER IX.

WUDDERS (WODDEVANDLU = ODDAN).

WUDDERS are a labouring tribe of Telugu origin, scattered all over the country. They are tank-diggers, well-sinkers and road-makers, and usually live in detached settlements, building for themselves conical huts somewhat similar to those of the Domaras, with a low entrance.

They are a fine looking race; most of them are by profession Vaishnavites, wearing the trident marks on their foreheads, arms and breasts, and, though they recognize Vishnu as their principal deity, they are in reality worshippers of one of the destroying spirits, "Yellammal."

It is supposed that they emigrated originally from Orissa, and now wander about the country, remaining temporarily in those places where they obtain work.

They eat every description of animal food, and are much addicted, like most of the lower classes, to spirituous liquors.

Wudders are divided into two main branches :—

- (1) Kallu (Stone) Wudders.
- (2) Mannu (Earth) Wudders.

These main divisions are divided into three clans or gotrams, viz. :—

- (1) Boja.
- (2) Yattinavaru.
- (3) Bailu Wudder.

These clans do not intermarry.

They are a hardworking people, but have a bad reputation for rendering assistance to highway men and robbers, and frequently do a little on their own account.

They dislike the daily wage system, but will work in gangs on contract, and on these occasions it is the custom for the whole gang—men, women and children—to take a share in the work. As a class, they are wholly uneducated.

In the Ceded Districts some of the Wudders are known as “ Donga Wuddiwars ” or thieving Wudders from the fact of their having taken to crime as a profession, and the appellation well suits them ; they are desperate, and at times very cruel when any opposition is offered, and have been known to inflict severe personal injuries on their victims.

In the social scale Wudders are superior to Erukakas (Koravars) and Domaras.

Being exclusively a Telugu sect, their language is a corrupt form of Telugu ; but those settled in the southern districts are conversant with Tamil.

Those of the tribe who have adopted criminal habits are skilful burglars and inveterate robbers : they are chiefly to be found among the Stone Wudder class, who, beside their occupation of building walls, are also skilful stone-cutters. By going about under the pretence of mending grindstones, they obtain much useful information as to the houses to be looted or parties of travellers to be attacked. In committing a highway robbery or dacoity, they are always armed with stout sticks and use great violence in the event of any resist-



ance being offered. Their depredations are usually confined to a radius of 10 or 15 miles from their settlement, but they seldom set out in large bands for the express purpose of committing crimes, rather seizing opportunities as they present themselves. Burglary by Wudders may usually be traced to them if careful observations are made of the breach in the wall; the implement is ordinarily the crowbar used by them in their profession as stone-workers; the breach is made at the back or side of the house near the foundations, and the blunt marks of the crowbar are, as a rule, noticeable; the work is clumsily performed and not always successful. Where there has been one successful case, there are invariably several signs of unsuccessful attempts in the neighbourhood. Another implement used by them is called the "pár kuchi," a stick with a long iron ferrule, but this is an ineffectual weapon and more ordinarily kept as a means of defence.

All Wudders are not criminals, and as they do not form a class in which crime is *de facto* the only means of livelihood, they perform no special ceremonies to invoke the aid of their deity in their undertakings; but should success crown their endeavours, they give themselves up to feasting and merriment for several days.

They will never confess or implicate another of their fraternity, and, should one of them be accused of a crime, the women are most clamorous and inflict personal injuries on themselves and their children to deter the police from doing their duty, and then accuse them of torture. Women and

children belonging to criminal gangs are experts in committing grain thefts from kalams or threshing floors, where they are engaged in harvest time, and also in purloining their neighbour's poultry.

Stolen property is seldom found with Wudders : their receivers are legion, but they especially favour liquor shop-keepers in the vicinity of their encampment with whom they are on terms of intimacy and to whom they are frequently largely indebted. Instances have been known of valuable jewellery being exchanged for a few drams of arrack. Identifiable property is altered at once, many of the Wudders being themselves able to melt gold and silver jewellery ; they then dispose of them for about one-tenth of the value.

In each Wudder community there is a headman called the "Gunga Raja." He is of the "Boja" gotram and exercises jurisdiction in caste disputes and the like, and, in the case of criminal gangs of these people, he receives two shares of spoil. In non-criminal gangs the "Gunga Raja" engages in the contracts to be performed by his followers.

Brahmins exercise spiritual jurisdiction over these people and are consulted in matters connected with marriage and other ceremonies. The marriage ceremony is not a tedious one. It consists of the bride and bridegroom walking three times round a stake placed for the purpose in the ground ! Remarriage of widows and divorced women is permitted. Infant marriage is allowed, but seldom practised.

## CHAPTER X.

## KALLARS.

THOUGH not a wandering tribe, the Kallars, like the Maravars, are the principal criminals of the southern districts of the presidency—Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura and Tinnevely. In the Madura and Trichinopoly districts, they form the most remarkable class.

They are a dark race of small stature with many distinctive peculiarities pointing them out as having sprung from an aboriginal tribe.

The word “Kallan” means thief or robber in many of the languages of Southern India, and is supposed to have been applied to them as indicative of their peculiar mode of earning a livelihood—their violent and lawless habits. Their profession is that of stealing with or without violence as opportunities offer. Before the British entered the country they were in constant warfare with their neighbours.

The tribe is divided into two main divisions—the Mēl Nâdú or western country and the Kîl Nâdú or eastern country. Members of these divisions do not intermarry.

The Kîl Nâdú comprises the nâdús of Mēlúr, a village situated about 16 miles from Madura, and its inhabitants, whose agnomen is “Ambalakaran,” are descendants of a clan which immigrated into the country.

The legend runs thus:—“Some Kallars belong-

ing to the Valanâdú, the capital of which was Con-jeeveram (Káncchipuram), came down south with a number of dogs on a grand hunting expedition, armed with their peculiar weapons, pikes, bludgeons and "Vellari Thadies" or clubs shaped like boomerangs. While engaged in their sport somewhere in the neighbourhood of Mélúr, they observed a peacock with its tail spread showing fight to one of their dogs. From this they inferred that the country was one favourable to bodily strength and courage and determined to settle. They accordingly entered into negotiations with the Vellálans, who were lords of the soil, and eventually took service under them. In course of time their relations and friends of the Valanâdú joined them, and a numerous Kallar community sprang up. The masters and servants did not succeed in living amicably together. The Kallars behaved, or were thought to behave, badly and were frequently punished. They resisted and retaliated, and at last they compelled the Vellálans to draw up a code of rules for their protection.

The following are some of the rules passed :—

(a) If a Kallan lost a tooth through a blow given by his master, the latter was to be fined 10 kali chackrams.

(b) If a Kallan had his ear torn under punishment, his master must pay a fine of 6 kali chackrams.

(c) If a Kallan had his skull fractured, his master must pay 30 chackrams, or, in default, have his own skull fractured.

(d) If a Kallan \*had his arm or leg broken, his master must pay a fine of 20 chackrams, give the injured man a certain amount of grain, cloths, &c., and likewise grant him in fee simple as much "nunja" (wet) land as could be sown with a "kalam" of seed, and two "kurukkams" of "punja" (dry) land.

(e) If a Kallan were killed, his master must pay a fine of 100 chackrams, or, in default, be handed over to the mercy of the murdered man's relations.

As might be expected, the Vellálans soon lost their hold over the Kallars after the promulgation of these rules; and, in course of time, they (the Vellálans) were reduced to great poverty, and eventually ousted bodily from their possessions. The Kallars then called their newly-acquired territory "Than-arasu Nâdu" or independent country, and set the then government at defiance, showing respect only to Alagar or Alagiriswami, the head of the great Alagar kovil in Madura (*vide* notes on the Alagari class); they habitually make large offerings at the shrine of Alagiriswami, and have always regarded him as their own peculiar deity. At this temple there is an interesting collection of swords and billhooks (*Tam.* *rutharwakkal*) of all sizes from 2' 4" to 12', clubs (*Tam.* *kethaikal*) and tridents or spears (*Tam.* *subangal*) which are offerings of the Kallars.

In the time of the Kartakal, *i.e.*, the Nayakkan dynasty, the Kallars steadily refused to pay tribute, arguing always, when called upon to pay like other castes and classes, that "the heavens supplied the

earth with rain, their cattle ploughed the land, and they cultivated it, and therefore there was no possible reason why they should pay anything." Their conduct was so violent and aggressive that bodies of troops marching from Trichinopoly to Tinnevely or *vice versa* found it expedient to avoid the direct road through the Mélúr nâdú and take a circuitous route.

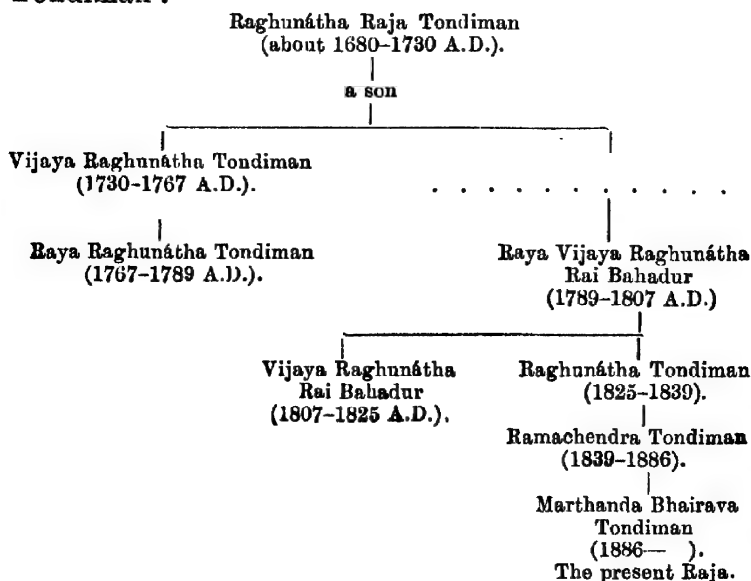
The origin of the Kallar caste, as also that of the Maravars and Ahambadayars, is mythologically traced to "Indra" and "Aghalia," the wife of Rishi Gautama. The legend is that Indra and Rishi Gautama were, among others, rival suitors for the hand of Aghalia. Rishi Gautama was the successful one; this so incensed Indra that he determined to win Aghalia at all hazards, and, by means of a cleverly devised ruse, succeeded, and Aghalia bore him three sons who, respectively, took the names "Kalla," "Marava" and "Ahambadya." The three castes have the agnomen of "Théva" or god and claim to be the descendants of "Thévan" (Indra). In spite of the alleged common ancestry of these three classes, they have now formed themselves into distinct castes and intermarriage between Kallars and the other two classes is not allowed.

Following a similar course of action to that adopted by the Kîl Nâdú Kallars, the Mêl Nâdú Kallars gained extensive possessions stretching to the extremity of the great Dindigul valley, and, though in the early period of British rule in India, the Kallars gave infinite trouble to the authorities,

they have of more recent years, since 1801, when the province of Madura was annexed to the Company's territories, changed their habits and submitted to order. They are, however, still a bold and high spirited people, with whom crime is looked upon as a natural excitement.

The head of the Kallars is the Raja of the Pudukota state. This state was founded by Raghunátha Kilavan, Setupati of Ramnad (1673-1708 A.D.). He fell in love with Kattári, a girl of the Kallar caste, married her and appointed her brother chief of the district of Pudukota with the title of Raghunátha Tondiman, in lieu of one Pallavarayan Tondiman, the former chief who had attempted to transfer the estate from the Ramnad territories to those of Tanjore.

The following genealogical tree shows the descent of the present Raja from Raghunátha Raja Tondiman :—



The Kallars of Pudukota style themselves "Seruvasal Kallars," and those in the Trichinopoly district, "Veesanganattu Kallars;" but both appear to be only local sub-divisions of the great Mēl and Kīl Nādús.

Their language is essentially Tamil. Both males and females are accustomed to stretch to the utmost possible limit the lobes of their ears; the unpleasant disfigurement is effected by the mother boring the ears of her infant and inserting heavy pieces of metal, generally lead, into the apertures. The effect so produced is wonderful, and it is not at all uncommon to see the ears of a Kallan hanging on his shoulders. When violently angry a Kallan will sometimes tear in two the attenuated strips of flesh which constitute his ears, expecting thereby to compel his adversary to do likewise as a sort of *amende honorable*; and altercations between women constantly lead to one or both parties having the ears violently pulled asunder. Formerly where a Kallar girl was deputed, as frequently happened, to guide a stranger in safety through a Kallar tract, if any of her caste people attempted to offer violence to her charge in spite of her protestations, she would immediately tear open one of her ears and run off at full speed to her home to complain of what had been done; the result of her complaint was invariably a sentence to the effect that, amongst other things, the culprits should have *both* their ears torn in expiation of their breach of the bye-laws of the forest.



The savage disposition of the Kallars appears from the following description of a custom which exceeds in atrocity almost every crime of violence of which history affords an example. The Survey account states that—"The women have all the ill qualities and evil dispositions of the men; in most of their actions they are inflexibly vindictive and furious on the least injury, even on suspicion, which prompts to the most violent revenge without any regard to consequences. A horrible custom exists among the females of the class: when a quarrel or dissension arises between them, the insulted woman brings her child to the house of the aggressor and kills it at her door to avenge herself, although her vengeance is attended with the most cruel barbarity. She then immediately proceeds to a neighbouring village with all her goods and chattels: in this attempt she is opposed by her neighbours, which gives rise to clamour and outrage; the complaint is then carried to the head 'Ambalacar,' who lays it before the elders of the village and solicits their interference to terminate the quarrel. In the course of this investigation, if the husband finds that sufficient evidence has been brought against his wife, that she had given cause for the provocation and aggression, then he proceeds unobserved by the assembly to his house and brings one of his children, and in the presence of witnesses kills his child at the door of the woman who had first killed her child; by this mode of proceeding he considers that he has saved himself

much trouble and expense which would otherwise have devolved on him. This circumstance is soon brought to the notice of the tribunal, who proclaim that the offence committed is sufficiently avenged. But should this voluntary retribution of revenge not be executed by the convicted person, the tribunal is prorogued to a limited time, fifteen days generally. Before the expiration of that period one of the children of the convicted person must be killed, at the same time he is to bear all expenses contingent on a general feast and merry-making for the assembly for three days." Such is the inhuman barbarity in avenging outrage which proves the innate cruelty of the people and the unrestrained barbarity of their manners and morals. Happily these atrocious customs are unknown among the Kallars of the present day.

The crimes that Kallars are addicted to are dacoity (in houses or on highways), robbery, house-breaking and cattle-stealing. In all of these they are adepts. They are usually armed with "Vellari thadis" or clubs, and occasionally with knives similar to those worn by the inhabitants of the Western coast. Their method of housebreaking is to make the breach in the wall *under* the door, a lad of diminutive size then creeps in and opens the door for his elders, who help themselves to anything they can get. Jewels worn by sleepers are seldom touched. The stolen property is hidden in convenient places, in drains, wells, straw stacks, and is sometimes returned to the owner on receipt

of black mail from him called "Tuppu kúli" or "clue hire." Their chief receivers are among the Mangapottoo and Natookottai Chetties. Vendors of arrack and toddy are instrumental in the disposal of petty things, cloths and the like, but in grave crimes months elapse before the booty is in any way disturbed or disposed of.

The women seldom join in crimes, but assist the men in their dealings with the Chetties.

They observe omens before starting on depredations and consult their household gods. An omen peculiar to them is this: two flowers—one red and the other white—are placed before the idol, a symbol of their god "Kulla Alagar": the white flower is the emblem of success: a child of tender years is then told to pluck a petal of one of the two flowers and the undertaking rests upon the choice made by the child.

Though not essentially a wandering tribe, Kallars use the railways and visit adjacent districts where, as a class, they are unknown and commit their depredations; if noticed and questioned by an inquisitive policeman or villager, the reply they give is that they are traders in cattle, visiting the various cattle markets. Disguises are not adopted by them. Signals are exchanged by whistling or scribbling on the ground; and while committing crime names are never mentioned: they address each other as the "big one," the "little one," using ambiguous terms.

Even to this day children of the Kallar tribe

are brought up in the olden fashion as though intended to gain their livelihood by preying on their neighbours' property. "The boyhood of every Kallar," says Mr. Nelson, "is supposed to be passed in acquiring the rudiments of the only profession for which he can be naturally adapted, namely, that of a thief and a robber. At fifteen he is usually entitled to be considered a proficient, and from that time forth he is allowed to grow his hair as long as he pleases, a privilege denied to younger boys. At the same time he is often rewarded for his expertness as a thief by the hand of one of his female relations."

The marriage customs of the Kallars are very peculiar. In the first place their marriages depend entirely upon consanguinity and are irrespective altogether of the wishes of either of the parties thereto or their parents. The most proper alliance, in the opinion of a Kallan, is one between a man and the daughter of his father's sister, and if an individual have such a cousin he must marry her whatever disparity there may be between their ages. A boy of fifteen must marry such a cousin even if she be thirty or forty years old if her father insists upon his so doing. Failing a cousin of this sort, he must marry his aunt or his niece or any other near relative. If his father's brother has a daughter and insists upon his marrying her, he cannot refuse, whatever may be the woman's age.

When a wedding takes place, the sister of the bridegroom goes to the house of the parents of the

bride and presents them with 21 kali fanams and a cloth, and at the same time ties some horse hair round the bride's neck. She then brings her and her relatives to the house of the bridegroom, where a feast is prepared. Sheep are killed and stores of liquor kept ready, and all partake of the good cheer provided. After this the bride and bridegroom are conducted to the house of the latter and the two solemnly perform the ceremony of exchanging "Vel-lari thadis" or boomerang-shaped clubs. Another feast is then given in the house of the bride, and she is presented by her parents with one "marakkal" of rice and a hen. She then goes with her husband to his house and the ceremony is complete in every respect.

During the first twelve months after the marriage, it is customary for the wife's parents to invite the pair to stay with them a day or two on the occasion of any feast and to present them on their departure with a marakkal of rice and a cock. At the time of the first "Pongal" feast after the marriage the presents customarily given to the son-in-law are five marakkals of rice, five loads of pots and pans (chatties), five bunches of plantains, five cocoanuts and five lumps of jaggery.

A divorce on either side is easily obtained. A husband dissatisfied with his wife can send her away if he be willing at the same time to give her half of his property, and a wife can leave her husband at will upon forfeiture of 42 "kali fanams." A widow may marry any man she fancies if she can induce

him to make her a present of 10 fanams. One of the customs of the western Kallars is specially curious. It constantly happens that a woman is the wife of either ten, eight, six or two husbands, who are held to be the fathers jointly and severally of any children that may be born of her body, and still more curiously, when the children of such a family grow up, they, for some unknown reason, invariably style themselves the children not of ten, eight or six fathers as the case may be, but of "eight and two," or "six and two," or "four and two" fathers.

Many Kallars practise the rite of circumcision, which custom has, it is said, been observed in this tribe from very ancient times.

As a people they profess to be worshippers of Siva, although, in reality, they are for the most part merely demon worshippers. They both burn and bury their dead. Kallars are not particular as to their outward appearances, dress, &c. The men wear a coarse white cloth round their loins and an upper cloth or angavastiram, also of coarse material, and a red handkerchief; they seldom wear jackets. The women are also scantily clad: a coarse white sarai completes their attire; they never wear the chola.

In the social scale they are considered to be of a low caste, ranking above the Pariahs: they are, however, allowed to approach Brahmins with impunity, and may even touch his "sacred" person. Their jewels and ornaments are similar to those worn by other Hindus of inferior social standing.

The horse-hair "karai" worn by women is the symbol of married life, and its absence a sure sign of widowhood.

The office of head of the clan or "Ambalacar" is hereditary. The Ambalacar exercises supreme jurisdiction over the Kallars of his clan in both temporal and spiritual matters; and, as a matter of right, presides over their punchayets. When questions of chastity, property and the like arise, the Ambalacar adjudicates, and his decision is final.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MARAVARS.

IN former times the Maravars, as a great fighting or warrior tribe, held the same position in the south that the Rajput tribes held in Northern India, only they did not rise to the same rank and power as that attained by the latter. They were a wild, lawless, unmanageable race, and were a perpetual terror to quiet and peaceable tribes. They are found in greatest numbers in the Madura and Tinnevely districts.

The tribe is divided into seven principal clans : these are as follows :—

- (1) Sembû-Nâttu.
- (2) Kondayan-Kottei.
- (3) Apanûr-Nâttu.
- (4) Agatâ.
- (5) Orûr (Oreiyûr)-Nâttu.
- (6) Uppu-Kottei.
- (7) Kurichi-Kattu.

There are other clans besides these, but of inferior rank. The highest of all is the Sembû-Nâttu, but which is the best or which the worst as regards character it would be difficult to say : all are much alike. The "Maravans," as they are termed in Madura, were once very numerous and powerful in that district ; but compared with ancient times their numbers, have been greatly reduced. They were formerly notorious for turbulence and



lawlessness, and, ninety years ago, gave much trouble to the British authorities of the district; but they have now settled down, for the most part, to peaceable habits, exhibiting, however, a bolder and more determined spirit than their neighbours.

The head of the Maravar tribe is the "Setupati" of Ramnad. The Setupatis claim to belong to the ancient Maravar race and to have been the rulers of the whole of the south of India before the immigration of the "Kurumbas," by whom the Maravars were defeated and driven back to the extreme south. Their chiefs lost all semblance of power till the descendant of the old ruling family was, in the seventeenth century, reinstated in a portion of his ancient patrimony by Muttu Krishnappa, the Nayakka of Madura, and installed at Ramnad.

Mr. Nelson (*Madura Country*, pp. 110-115) discusses the former history of the Setupatis, and his remarks deserve study. He concludes that they were certainly lords of Ramnad from a very remote period, and that the Setupati created by Muttu Krishnappa was probably a grandson of the last Setupati who had been murdered by "one of the last of the Pândiyas who preceded Visvanatha Nayakkan." Dr. Burgess states that there was a Udiyan Setupati in S.S. 1336 (A.D. 1414-15), who built the shrines of the inner temples of Raméshwaram and gave four villages in the Tinnevely district to the temple there; also a Chinna Udaiyan Setupati who in S.S. 1411 (A.D. 1489-90) made additions to the temple; and a Tirumala Setupati, who in S.S. 1422

(A.D. 1500-1) built a part of the second *prákára* and had a son, Raghunátha Tirumala, who was alive in S.S. 1461 (A.D. 1539-40).

Abandoning all attempt to trace their earlier history, the following genealogy gives a sketch of the family from the Setupati who was first created chief of Ramnad by the Nayakka of Madura in A.D. 1604:—



At the beginning of the sixteenth century there was no Setupati in existence. The cultivation had become very limited. Thick jungles had sprung up in every direction. The roads were infested with gangs of robbers. Every village was under a petty ruler, who acted with free independence and oppressed and harassed the pilgrims who resorted to Raméswāram. Muttu Krishnappa, the then ruler of Madura, was earnestly exhorted by the pilgrims to appoint a ruler, whose authority would ensure to their safe travel to and from Raméswaram. Muttu Krishnappa, therefore, thought it expedient to re-establish the ancient Marava dynasty of the Setupatis or the Guardians of Raméswaram. Accordingly he had Sadayaka Tevar, a descendant of the ancient Setupati, crowned at Pogalūr, a village 10 miles to the west of Ramnad, in 1604. He was further created chief of the seventy-two poligars. It is from this date that we have some authentic history of the Setupatis.

(1) *Sadayaka Tevar Udaiyan Setupati (1640-1621).*—He amply satisfied the expectations of Muttu Krishnappa, to whom an annual tribute was sent. Peace was restored to the country. Cultivation was encouraged. The towns of Ramnad and Pogalūr were fortified and improved. This prince further made some conquests by subduing the important villages of Vadakku-Vattagai, Kálaiyárkovil and Pattamangalam. After a useful reign of seventeen years, he died in 1621. His son Kúttan Setupati succeeded him.

(2) *Kúttan Setupati (1621-1635)*.—This prince quietly enjoyed the fruits of his father's labour. The country was prosperous and peaceful during the fourteen years that he ruled over it. He died in 1635, leaving his brother Sadayaka Tevar to succeed him. He left besides a sister, Gangai Nachchiyar. (Mr. Nelson's *Madura Country*, page 128.)

(3) *Sadayaka Tevar alias Davalay Setupati (1635-1645)*.—Nothing of importance transpired during the first three years of this prince's reign. But in the fourth year the prince announced his intention of appointing his adopted son Raghunátha Tevar as his successor. This disclosure enraged his illegitimate brother Tambi Tevar, who ruled over Kalaiyarkovil as governor. Tambi was not inactive. He gained over to his side the King of Madura, who, besides creating him "Tambi Setupati," supplied him with funds and forces to dethrone the prince. Ramnad fell into the hands of the King of Madura's forces, and Davalay Setupati retreated to Pamban, where he was finally defeated and taken captive. He was sent to Madura and thrown into a dungeon.

Tambi had now a very difficult task before him. The Davalay Setupati's nephews, Raghunátha Tevar and Narayana Tevar, were in arms against him, and at last, finding no one to befriend him among the relatives of the Setupati, Tambi was obliged to flee to the Court of Madura. Terumalai Nayakka, however, now discovered his mistake, and,

in order to quiet the country, released the Davalay Setupati and restored him.

The Setupati was set at liberty to the satisfaction of all parties in 1640. After his restoration he reigned for four or five years in peace, when he was murdered in cold blood by Tambi Tevar in 1645.

Then followed anarchy and confusion at Ramnad. The principal Marava chiefs were preparing for war; but this was opportunely averted by the interference of Tirumalai Nayakka, who partitioned the Ramnad kingdom into three portions in 1646. Raghunátha Tevar, the nephew of the Davalay Setupati, was placed on the hereditary throne of the Ramnad Setupati. His brothers Tanaka Tevar and Narayana Tevar were made to rule jointly at Tiruvadanaí. Sivagangai was placed under the sovereignty of Tambi Tevar.

(4) *Raghunátha Setupati* alias *Tirumalai Setupati* (1645-1670).—This Setupati's reign was remarkable for territorial aggrandisement. The partitioned countries became again incorporated owing to the early deaths of Tanaka Tevar and Tambi Tevar. When Tambi Tevar was alive, the Setupati, in alliance with him, defeated the forces of Tanjore in a pitched battle, and annexed the towns of Manarkoil, Pattukkottai, Devakottai, Arundanghi and Tiruvallur.

At this time the King of Mysore invaded Madura, and at the request of the King of Madura the Setupati went in command of a large army and

defeated the enemy in two very severely contested engagements. The King of Madura, in gratitude for the services rendered, ceded to the Setupati the villages of Tiruppuvanam, Tiruchulai and Palimadai. Under this Setupati the Marawar dynasty reached the zenith of its power. It was he who introduced the celebration of the "Navaratri" festival at Ramnad. After a quiet and beneficent reign of thirty years he died in 1670, leaving his nephew Raja Súrya Tevar to succeed him.

This Setupati refused to aid his suzerain against the Muhammadan invasion and consequently the Nayakka invaded his territories to punish him for treason. The war was conducted with varying fortunes and seems to have died a natural death. The Setupati joined in the war, which ended in the downfall of the Nayakkas of Tanjore and the sack of the city; but according to Mr. Nelson the Marava army was little more than a marauding mob.

(5) *Surya Tevar (1670).*—This Setupati compromised himself in some way in the Tanjore war, and was seized, shortly after his accession, by Verekalá Krishnappa, the Madura Davalay, and was imprisoned at Trichinopoly, where he was secretly put to death.

Súrya Tevar left no immediate heir to succeed him. Consequently the task of nominating a successor devolved on the principal Marava chiefs, who came to no definite understanding. For a time the country was without a Setupati, but Attana, and

after him Chandrappa Servaikáran, managed the affairs of the kingdom. Finally Raghunátha Tevar Kilavan, illegitimate son of the last Setupati, was installed.

(6) *Raghunátha Tevar Kilavan Setupati (1673-1708)*.—The reign of this ruler was very remarkable for several important events. The commencement of the reign was marked by his assassination of the two principal men who had assisted him in coming to the throne. His whole reign was further remarkable for the way in which he persecuted the Christians. The revolting circumstances attending the murder of the Missionary John DeBritto—an atrocity perpetrated under the express orders of the Setupati—are fully narrated by Mr. Nelson in his *Madura Country*, pages 217-224. He appointed his brother-in-law Raghunátha (belonging to the Kallar caste), whose sister Kattari he married, Tondiman of Pudukota. It was in this reign that the capital of the territory was removed from Pogalúr to Ramnad, the present seat of government. This prince was also famous for his bravery in war. He rescued the Nayakka of Madura from the tyranny of Rustam Khán and successfully prosecuted a war against the King of Tanjore, who was obliged to cede all the territories south of the Amburi river. Intrigues seem to have been the order of the day during this reign, and the history is a succession of plots and rebellions resulting in constant disturbance and warfare. There was a desultory war with Tanjore in A.D. 1700, and in



1702 on one occasion an army from Madura, aided by a force from Tanjore, was defeated by the Setupati and driven back. Another signal victory was obtained over Tanjore in 1709, a year which was made memorable by a most appalling famine, aggravated by desolating flood. Raghunátha Tevar Kilavan Setupati breathed his last in 1708, and his numerous wives burned themselves alive on his funeral pyre. He was succeeded by his adopted son (the relationship is somewhat doubtful, *Madura Country*, page 247).\*

(7) *Vijaya Ragunátha Tevar* alias *Tiruvadaiya Tevar* (1709-1723).—The King of Tanjore was not inactive during this reign. He gained over the Rajah of Pudukota to his side and declared war against the Setupati, who went out to meet the allied forces at Arundanghi. Some indecisive actions were fought. An epidemic broke out in the camp of the Setupati, which carried off many of his sons and wives, and he himself contracted the disease, which proved fatal shortly after his return to Ramnad. He nominated one Tandar Tevar, a great grandson of the father of the late Kilavan Setupati, as his successor.

(8) *Tandar Tevar* (1723-1724).—The accession of this Setupati to the throne was contested by Bhavani Sankara Tevar, an illegitimate son of Kilavan Setupati. He got the assistance of the King of Tanjore by promising to cede him some

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\* Tiruvadaiya Tevar alias Vijaya Raghunátha Tevar, son of Kadamba Tevar.

territory and invaded Ramnad with the Tanjore force within four months of the accession of the Setupati. The allied forces of the Setupati, the Tondiman and the King of Madura were unable to arrest the advance of the Tanjore army, which finally captured Ramnad and took the Setupati prisoner. He was shortly afterwards put to death and Bhavani Sankara Tevar proclaimed himself Setupati.

(9) *Bhavani Sankara Setupati (1724-1728).*

—He was very injudicious in his treatment of the poligars under him. One Sasivarma Periyar Udiyar Tevar was deprived of his paliyam. He therefore fled to the court of the King of Tanjore, and gained his favour by the extraordinary bravery he showed in fighting a large tiger. Kutta Tevar, the maternal uncle of the last Setupati and the legal heir who had escaped from Ramnad at the time of capture by Bhavani Sankara, was also at this time at Tanjore. Kutta and Sasivarma became close friends, and by their joint inducement got the King of Tanjore to entrust them with a large force with which they defeated the Setupati at a battle fought at Uraiyr, in which the latter was taken prisoner. After their success Kutta Tevar was proclaimed Setupati.

(10) *Kutta Tevar alias Kumará Muttu Vijaya Raghunátha Setupati (1728-1734).*—Kutta Tevar was not destined to rule over the extensive territories of Ramnad. For it was arranged before the success which gained him the throne that the terri-

tory should be parcelled out between the confederates. Accordingly the King of Tanjore took all the lands north of the Pambar. The remainder was divided into five parts, of which two went to the share of Raja Muttu Vijaya Raghunátha Periya Udaiya Tevar, who made Sivagangai his capital. (He married Akilambivari Nachchiyar, the illegitimate daughter of the Setupati. His territory is also called Sinnavadagai.) Over the remaining three parts called "Pereyavadagai," which form the present Ramnad territory, the Setupati Kutta Tevar ruled. He was succeeded by his son Muttu Kumara Vijaya Raghunátha Tevar.

(11) *Muttu Kumara Vijaya Raghunátha Setupati* (1734-1747).—During the reign of this prince the Davalay was all powerful. The prince dying in the prime of his life without any issue, the Davalay nominated Rakka Tevar, a cousin of the deceased Kutta Tevar, to the rule.

(12) *Rakka Tevar Setupati* (1747-1748).—This reign was remarkable for the repulsion of an invasion by the King of Tanjore by the Davalay Vellaiyan Servaikaran, who also commanded several military expeditions and subjugated several subordinate poligars in the Tinnevely district.

The Setupati grew afraid of the Davalay's power and recalled him from Tinnevely. A step which proved his ruin, for, on his return, the Davalay openly rebelled, and the Setupati was, therefore, obliged to flee for safety to Pamban. Thither he was pursued and taken prisoner and

deposed. One Sella Tevar *alias* Vijaya Raghunátha Tevar, a member of the Kilavan family, was placed on the throne by the Davalay.

(13) *Sella Tevar alias Vijaya Raghunátha Setupati (1748-1760).*—This prince ruled for twelve years, during which another invasion by the Tanjore Raja was firmly met with and defeated by the Davalay. Sella Tevar died in 1760 and was succeeded by his sister's son Muttu Ramalinga Tevar, a child two years old.\*

(14) *Muttu Ramalinga Setupati (1760-1772, 1780-1794).*—Vellaiyan Servaikaran, the powerful Davalay, died at the commencement of this reign. He was succeeded by Damodaram Pillai in his Davalayship. Muttu Teruvay Nachchiar, the mother of the infant prince, acted as regent. In 1770 the Raja of Tanjore was again defeated, and that most decisively by an army under the command of Damodaram Pillai. This was the last occasion on which the troops of Ramnad were permitted to distinguish themselves.

In the year 1773 the army of the Setupati was defeated by an English force under General Joseph Smith, who subdued the territory on behalf of the Nawab of Trichinopoly. The infant Setupati, his mother Muttu Teruvay Nachchiar, and his sister Mangalisvari Nachchiar were removed from Ramnad and kept at Trichinopoly under surveillance.

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\* Dr. Burgess states on the authority of the best informed men at Raméswarem that Sella Tevar's sister Muttu Taravay Nachchiar married Neriñji Tevar of Yolambádu and had a son born in S.S. 1647 (A.D. 1725-6). He adds that she is stated to have ruled from S.S. 1643 (A.D. 1721-2).

The territory was for a period of eight years, *i.e.*, from 1773 to 1780, under the direct management of the Nawab.

The petty chiefs who had respected the power of the Setupati raised an army and threatened to capture Ramnad and drive away the Nawab's managers. This circumstance alarmed the Nawab, who deemed it prudent to set the Setupati at liberty and despatch him to Ramnad at the head of an army: this arrangement had the desired effect. The country became tranquil and the chiefs were defeated.

The Setupati resumed the reins of government, and continued to rule for fourteen years until 1794. His acts at the end of this period became very suspicious, verging on rebellion, so that, at the instance of Mangalisvari Nachchiyar, his sister, he was deposed and carried away as a prisoner to Trichinopoly under the orders of the Nawab.

The English had this time become the virtual rulers of the Carnatic, and they sent the Setupati to Madras as a State prisoner. The Ramnad territory was taken under British rule and continued thereunder for seven years up to 1802. In 1803 the British Government placed Rani Mangalisvari Nachchiyar, the sister of the Setupati, on the throne.

(15) *Mangalisvari Nachchiyar (1803-1812).*—In the year 1803 a permanent settlement was made by which the Rani Setupati bound herself and her successors to pay to the English Government the annual peishkush of Rs. 3,24,387-1-2. She ruled the

estate for ten years. She was called the "Istimrari Zamindarni" in remembrance of the settlement.

This reign was particularly remarkable for the charitable endowments she made out of the permanently-settled villages of the estate. Her adopted son, Annasawmi Setupati *alias* Muttu Vijaya Raghunátha Setupati, succeeded her.

(16) *Annaswami Setupati alias Muttu Vijaya Raghunátha Setupati (1812-1815)*.—This prince was a minor when his adopted mother died. Pradhani Tyaga Raja Pillai carried on the administration of the country. This prince's title, or in other words the adoption, was not disputed. Sivakami Nachchiar, the daughter of Muttu Ramalinga Setupati, sued in the Company's courts to have her claims to become Rani Setupati in preference to Annaswami recognized. She succeeded in her suit and was legally appointed the ruler of the estate in the room of Annaswami in the year 1815.

(17) *Sivakami Nachchiar (1815-1829)*.—This princess enjoyed the kingdom for one full year, during which she allowed the peiskush to fall into arrears. The estate, therefore, was placed under the management of the Court of the Sadar Adalat for fourteen years on her behalf. In the interval the law suit between the Rani Zamindar and Annaswami Setupati was prosecuted with the utmost vigour in the Appellate Court, which finally directed the restoration of the estate to Annaswami Setupati. The prince having died in the meanwhile, his widow Muttu Virayi Nachchiar, who successfully

conducted the suit to the end, adopted one Ramswami Tevar as her son, in whose favour she resigned her right to become Setupati.

(18) *Ramaswami Tevar* alias *Vijaya Raghunátha Ramaswami Setupati* (1829).—This prince died in the first year of his reign and was succeeded by his infant daughter Mangalisvari Nachchiyar.

(19) *Mangalisvari Nachchiyar* (1829-1838).—Muttu Virayi Nachchiyar, the Rani's grandmother, and Muttu Sella Tevar managed the affairs of the state on behalf of the Rani Setupati, who met with an early death. She was succeeded by her infant sister Dorai Raja Nachchiyar.

(20) *Dorai Raja Nachchiyar* (1838-1845).—Muttu Sella continued to act as manager, but his management was not approved of by the East India Company, to which several charges against him were preferred. The estate was placed under the Court of Wards, and although the manager was declared innocent after a thorough inquiry, he was not entrusted with the control of the estate, which continued under the management of the Court of Wards. Dorai Raja Nachchiyar died in 1845. Even after the death of the Rani, the Court of Wards continued to govern the estate till Paravatuwardini Nachchiyar, the wife of Ramaswami Setupati, was declared to be the lawful proprietress of the estate.

(21) *Paravatuwardini Nachchiyar* (1845-1868).—She assumed the management of the estate in 1846. She died in 1868, leaving her adopted

son Muttu Ramalinga Setupati to succeed her. During her management there was much protracted litigation, which necessarily involved the estate in heavy debt. Even the peishkush fell into arrears and accumulated. Ponnuswami Tevar, the son of the adopted Setupati, managed the estate.

(22) *Muttu Ramalinga Setupati (1868-1873).*—When this prince assumed the management of the estate, he found that the debts of the estate had alarmingly increased. But he could devise no means to get himself out of it. The estate was in danger. The English Government was, therefore, compelled to interfere. The estate was placed under attachment by the Special Assistant Collector. In the year 1873 the Setupati died suddenly, leaving two minor sons, Bhaskara Setupati and Dinakaraswami Tevar.

(23) The former, Bhaskara Setupati, is now the recognized proprietor of the estate, and the acknowledged head of the Marava tribe.\*

Such is the early history of the Setupatis, interesting as showing the turbulent character of the Maravars as a class. Besides the Setupati of Ramnad, their hereditary ruler, there are in the Tinnevely district many Maravar landlords, descendants of the old poligar chiefs, of good family and considerable property, notably the Zamindars of Uthumalai, Singampati, Urkâd, Surandei, Setur,

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\* Sewell's *Lists of Antiquities*, Vol. II.



Sivagiri, Maniachi, Kudumbar, Avadipuram, Talavankotai and Kollankondan. Besides these there are numerous Maravar families who live quietly and peaceably on their small properties.

The Maravars furnish nearly the whole of the village police (*kavilgars*, watchmen), and are at the same time the principal burglars, robbers and thieves of the Tinnevely district. Very often the thief and the watchman are one and the same individual. Except on the principle of "setting a thief to catch a thief," this appears an anomalous arrangement, but it is by no means confined to Tinnevely.

The Maravars of the present time, of course, retain only a shadow of the power which their ancestors wielded under the *poligars*, who commenced the "*kavil*" system. Still the Marava of to-day as a member of a caste which is more numerous and influential—as a man of superior physique and bold, independent spirit, thief and robber, village policeman and detective combined—is an immense power in the land.

There are three classes of village police in the Tinnevely district :—

(a) *Taliyaries*.—These are the Government village police paid by Government at rates ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per mensem from the villagecess fund levied at the rate of 1 anna per rupee on the land revenue assessment.

(b) *Kavilgars*.—Zamindars and Devastanam village police. These receive no regular pay for their

services. Some receive "svatantram" fees and emoluments at intervals, others enjoy "maniems" or "inam" lands, which are supposed to support countless relations and connections termed "pungalies," while nearly all receive some payment in kind at harvest.

(c) *Kudi Kavilgars*.—These are private watchmen employed by the villagers on their own account for the greater safety of their property. They are usually paid in kind and on the understanding that they return an equivalent in value for anything stolen. An agreement to this effect is entered into when the kudikavilgars are appointed; but as they have neither a fund nor any means for making such amends, the kudikavilgars resort to depredations elsewhere to meet the claims made against them, and thus one set of kudikavilgars preys on another, so on throughout the district till the system has become a veritable curse to the people, who are afraid to get rid of their nominal protectors lest they should be plundered wholesale.

It is thus estimated that a very large proportion of the Maravar population is intimately associated with the "kavil" system in the Tinnevely district, and, as the three classes of village watchmen are generally more or less related or connected with each other, they have immense power for good or evil. In Tinnevely the kudi kavilgars are in many cases either directly or indirectly the criminals of the district, and the difficulty of detecting crime committed by them is greatly enhanced owing to the widespread relationship between them and the

taliyaries and kavilgars who, except where spite or enmity exists, will never incriminate one another.

With regard to the origin of the Maravars it has been observed with reference to the Kallar class that they, with the Kallars and Ahambadiyars, are mythologically traced to Indra (the king of Hindu gods): there however exists among them a picturesque tradition to the effect that, in consequence of their assisting Râma in his war against the demon Râvana, that deity expressed his gratitude with the Tamil word “Marâven” (மராவேன்), “I will never forget,” and that they have ever since been called “Maravars.” But with more probability the word may be connected with “maram” (மரம்), which means killing, ferocity, bravery and the like, as indicative of their profession as robbers and thieves.

Some of their customs are peculiar. For instance, cousins on the father’s side may intermarry, a habit contrary to the general Hindu usage.

Divorce is easy and frequent and widows may remarry.

The Maravars wear their hair exceedingly long and, like the Kallars, both sexes hang heavy ornaments on their ears, thereby lengthening their lobes several inches; the ears of the women are sometimes so enormously elongated that they rest upon the neck. The men eschew the turban, the national covering for the head, and in its place tie a cloth round their heads. Their features are quite different from those of the races and tribes in their neighbourhood. They are tall, well made, and of somewhat striking physique.

The Maravars are essentially a "settled" race, and, as before stated, are almost entirely confined to the districts of Madura and Tinnevely. They are, however, to be found in small settlements in Tanjore, Trichinopoly and the Coimbatore districts, where in times of scarcity they are said to have migrated and taken employment as labourers under land-holders. In the Tanjore district they are largely employed as cart-drivers.

Disguises are not adopted by them when committing crime. They are especially addicted to dacoity, robbery, burglary and cattle-lifting. The women occasionally commit cattle thefts themselves, but, as a rule, are only instrumental in the disposal of stolen property, which they convey in their marketing baskets to the village Komati. Natookottai Chetties are among their chief receivers. The Maravars do not practise tatooing like the Kallars.

Their principal deity is "Alagar Swami" and, like the Kallars, they recognize the head of this temple as their spiritual pastor and master. A portion of the spoil is dedicated to this shrine, and the oath of allegiance to "Alagar Swami" is, as in the case of other classes recognizing this deity, very binding.

Men and women indulge largely in liquor and tobacco, and many are opium-eaters. Gambling is a favourite pastime.

#### *Ahambadiyars.*

The Maravars and the Ahambadiyars intermarry and have for the most part the same customs and

habits. The former, however, occupy a somewhat higher social position, and are more numerous than the latter, who are for the most part household servants, poor ryots and farm labourers.

They are divided into three branches—

- (1) Ahambadiyars.
- (2) Raja-básha Ahambadiyars.
- (3) Kottri-pattu Ahambadiyars.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE PARIAH OR PAREIYAN TRIBES.

THE local criminals throughout the presidency in all villages are the Pariahs, and, though they cannot be considered *de facto* a criminal tribe, yet a very large proportion of the criminals of the presidency are of this caste, notable among them being the Vépúr Pariahs of South Arcot.

The following account of the Pariah or the Pareiyan tribe is taken from Dr. Sherring's *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, chapter 11, volume III:—

“The common designation of these tribes in Tamil is ‘Pariah’ or ‘Pareiyan,’ in Telugu is ‘Mala,’ in Canarese is ‘Holia,’ in Malayalam is ‘Poliar,’ and in Mahratti is ‘Dhéd.’

“They are regarded by the Brahmins as defiling their presence and are not allowed to dwell in villages inhabited by Hindus, but live in their outskirts. They perform service of a very menial character, and, although much despised, are an exceedingly useful people. In their own estimation they constitute a fifth great caste in contra-distinction to the four Hindu castes.

“Formerly these tribes were in a condition of slavery to the superior castes. ‘There were,’ says Dr. Cornish, ‘fifteen species of slaves recognized, namely:—

- (1) Those born of slaves.
- (2) Those purchased for a price.

- (3) Those found by chance.
- (4) Slaves by descent.
- (5) Those fed and kept alive in times of famine.
- (6) Those given up as a pledge for money borrowed.
- (7) Those binding themselves for money borrowed.
- (8) Those captured in battle.
- (9) Those unable to pay gambling debts.
- (10) Those becoming slaves by their wish.
- (11) Apostates from a religion.
- (12) Slaves for a limited period.
- (13) Slaves for subsistence.
- (14) Those who for love of slave women became slaves.
- (15) By voluntary sale of liberty.

“Of these fifteen descriptions of slaves, the first four could never obtain their liberty without the consent of their owners. The other kinds of slaves might obtain their freedom under stipulated conditions. No Brahmin could ever be subjected to slavery.”

The Pariahs are a dark-skinned race, eating every species of food, hardworking, thriving, yet intensely ignorant and debased. In public passenger boats a Pariah dare not show his face, and in Government schools or schools helped with public money their case is very much the same. The Madras Presidency contains nearly five millions of these industrious and contemned people in nearly equal proportions of the two sexes. They are most numer-

ous in Chingleput and South Arcot, where they comprise 26 per cent. of the Hindu population.

These tribes pursue many kinds of occupation. A considerable number are agricultural labourers. Others are servants, village watchmen, workers in leather, scavengers and so forth. Their habits are low: they have a lax idea of the marriage tie, and most of them are addicted to intemperance. For the most part they are worshippers of demons and local deities. They belong to the "right hand" castes, of which, in the periodical disputes which occur, they are among the principal supporters, especially in opposition to the Pallans, a low agricultural people.

They live in the *pareichari*, a quarter set apart for themselves on the outskirts of villages.

In regard to the origin of the Pariahs, Dr. Caldwell considers that the balance of evidence is in favour of their being Dravidians. "Nevertheless," he remarks, "the supposition that they belong to a different race, that they are descended from the true aborigines of the country, a race older than the Dravidians themselves, and that they were reduced by the first Dravidians to servitude is not destitute of probability." He mentions the traditions, that the Canarese Pariahs were once an independent people, and that the Tamil Pariahs were formerly the most distinguished caste in the country. He also states that in certain parts the Pariahs enjoy peculiar privileges, especially at religious festivals.



The strongest argument which Dr. Caldwell says can be adduced in favour of their pre-Dravidian origin is “that the national name of Tamilians, Malayâlis, Kannadis, &c., is withheld from them by the *usus loquendi* of the Dravidian language and conferred exclusively upon the higher castes. When a person is called a Tamiran or Tamilian, it is meant that he is neither a Brahmin nor a member of any of the inferior castes, but a Dravidian Sudra. As none of the lower castes are ever denoted by this national name, it would seem to be implied that they do not belong to the nation, but, like the Tamil-speaking Brahmins and Muhammadans, to a different race.

Mr. Nelson in his *Manual of Madura* gives a complete account of these interesting though degraded tribes. It is as follows :—

(i) *Valluva Pareiyan.*

The Valluvans are by far the most respectable of the Pariahs, inasmuch as they act as “gúrús” or spiritual pastors to the others; and cannot be reproached to the same extent as other Pariahs on account of the filthiness of their lives and habits. Tiru Valluvan, the celebrated Tamil poet, belonged to this family.

(ii) *Thatha Pareiyan.*

These often wander about as religious beggars of the Vaishnava sect, and subsist entirely on alms given to them by all classes of people.

(iii) *Tangalāna or Tonda Pareiyan.*

This is perhaps the most numerous group, and, with the exception of the Valluvāns, the most respectable. They are usually employed as cultivators and predial slaves; but most of them are petty traders, artisans, domestic servants, horse-keepers and the like.

(iv) *Durchāli Pareiyan.*

The Durchālis are said to be distinguished from others as being eaters of frogs, mussels, jackals, &c.

(v) *Tiya Pareiyan.*

This tribe belongs properly to Malabar.

(vi) *Marasu Pareiyan.*

These play on a kind of tom-tom.

(vii) *Ambu Pareiyan.*

The Ambus, as the name implies, live properly by hunting wild animals with bow and arrow. They act as shikāries to zamindars or landowners and others when engaged in hunting in the jungles.

(viii) *Vadaga Pareiyan.*

The Vadagas belong properly to the Telugu country and to the Vaishnava sect, and are said to be hippophagists. They are often employed as palan-keen bearers.

(ix) *Aliya Pareiyan.*

These appear to be a tribe whose sole peculiarity consists in addressing their fathers by the title of "Âlei" and their mothers by that of "Âla." Many of them are employed in dressing skins for exportation, &c.

(x) *Valei Pareiyan.*

The Valeis, as their name implies, live properly by netting birds and works of a similar nature.

(xi) *Vettiyn Pareiyan.*

The members of this tribe properly beat tom-toms and act as undertakers at funerals. They also attend as tom-tom beaters when other ceremonies are performed, and eke out a living by hawking goods and doing odd jobs of various kinds. Some of them are to be found in every large village, their services being indispensably necessary wherever Hindus live in numbers.

(xii) *Koliya Pareiyan.*

These weave cloths of a coarse description.

(xiii) *Perum Pareiyan.*

The Perums are a better sort of Pariahs, employed principally as gentlemen's servants, &c.

(xiv) *Egâlis.*

The Egâlis are washermen by profession. As they wash only for Pariahs and have to handle the

filthiest and most disgusting of rags, the contempt with which they are regarded can be readily understood.

(xv) *Tamila Pareiyan.*

These are usually merchants, and are regarded as men of some substance and respectability.

(xvi) *Kudi Pillei.*

Barbers who shave Pariahs. Their occupation must be a most unpleasant one, and they are viewed with special abhorrence.

(xvii) *Pola Pareiyan.*

These make mats and baskets, &c., of bamboo, rushes, osiers and similar materials.

(xviii) *Tavalei-tinnum Pareiyan.*

So called because they eat frogs. Possibly this is only a local name of the Durchâli tribe.

(xix) *Mannal-Kâdei-tinnum Pareiyan.*

Eaters of the mannal-kâdei, a large, coarse kind of frog, or toad, which buries itself deep in the soil.

(xx) *Aruttu Kattatha Pareiyan.*

So called because their widows are not allowed to remarry. The observance of this high caste custom causes them to be somewhat respected.

(xxi) *Eiya and Ammei Pareiyan.*

These are in the habit of addressing their fathers and mothers by these two titles respectively.

(xxii) *Totti Pareiyan.*

The Tottis are found in every village. They are the village scavengers and messengers, and a certain number of them are paid for their services by Government.

(xxiii) *Ottaga Karan.*

Spinners of cotton thread. When work is slack, they till the soil and do other kinds of work.

(xxiv) *Kottaga Karan.*

Mostly rough-riders and grooms.

(xxv) *Sanku Pareiyan.*

Wear shells on the left arm, and are thereby readily distinguished. They blow conches (large shells) at ceremonies, and do various kinds of work.

(xxvi) *Solagu Kutti Pareiyan.*

Live chiefly by winnowing paddy and other kinds of grain.

(xxvii) *Arippu Karan.*

These wash sand for gold where gold is procurable. It is said that they find very minute particles of the precious metal in the Veigai, but not in sufficient abundance to repay their exertions.

(xxviii) *Saliya Pareiyan.*

Generally hawkers of cheap wares.

(xxix) *Uppareiyan.*

Scavengers.

(xxx) *Malei Pareiyan.*

Hill Pariahs, a tribe cultivating lands on the Palani and other hills. The Virupâkshi Paleiyakaran (poligar) settled a number of Pariahs, Poleiyans and others of the lowest caste on the Palanis about two hundred and fifty years ago, and so laid the foundations of the present colony.

There are many other tribes of Pariahs, but those given above are among the most numerous and important. As a class, they are composed of aboriginal races intermingled more or less with outcasts of various tribes, who have from time to time joined their ranks.

## VÉPUR PARIAHS.

The Vépúr Pariahs belong to the Sanku or Pannai Pareiyan tribe. Their origin is said to be as follows:—

The western portion of Vriddháchalam taluk, known as “Kolipattu,” formerly contained 72 villages under the control of poligars, having under them bands of Pariahs as retainers and employed as kavilgars or watchmen. These increased, and in course of time were disbanded and took to depredations, and are now recognized as the thieves and robbers of that part of the country.

They are chiefly found in the following 25 villages of the Vriddháchalam taluk :—

*A.—Vepúr Station Limits.*

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Vépúr.         | 7. Kattumanlore. |
| 2. Sirunesalore.  | 8. Malliamodu.   |
| 3. Pullore.       | 9. Sirungappam.  |
| 4. Thondakuruchi. | 10. Kaluthore.   |
| 5. Narigore.      | 11. Sepákkam.    |
| 6. Theruppayar.   | 12. Pulumbadi.   |

*B.—Sathiam Station Limits.*

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 13. Sathiam.  | 16. Vannathore. |
| 14. Kothanur. | 17. Nagar.      |
| 15. Nallore.  |                 |

*C.—Tholuthore Station Limits.*

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 18. Podaiyore. | 19. Atharnatham. |
|----------------|------------------|

*D.—Pennadam Station Limits.*

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 20. Thirumalupákkam. | 21. Nanthimangalam. |
|----------------------|---------------------|

*E.—Mangalore Station Limits.*

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 22. Pasar.       | 24. Poyapâdi.  |
| 23. Peruppákkam. | 25. Mangalore. |

These Pariahs who, from their criminal habits, have earned the appellation of “Thiruttu” or thieving Pariahs still owe their allegiance to the descendants of the poligars of Perianesalore, Kuttennaiyilore and Mangalore of the Vriddháchalam taluk. They have largely corrupted other classes of Pariahs living in neighbouring pareicharies, and a large criminal population has sprung into existence.

They are, as a rule, settled, but occasionally make predatory excursions into neighbouring villages and into the Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Salem and North Arcot districts; they however chiefly confine themselves to their own particular localities. Cultivation is their ostensible means of livelihood, and they usually own a few acres of dry land; but these lands are incapable of providing an adequate living for the members of their families; they are averse to labour for cooly unless as a means of getting information likely to be of use to them in a criminal undertaking. Burglary, theft and occasionally dacoity are their real means of livelihood. Burglary especially is adopted as a profession, and in this mode of crime they are adepts. Dark and rainy nights are chosen, and a party starts off in various directions, usually confining its operations to within a radius of about 30 miles from their settlements. Their habits are so well known to the inhabitants of surrounding villages, that they invariably apply to these Pariahs for the restoration of their property on the understanding that they pay an adequate proportion, usually about 25 per cent. of the value. This is termed "Mālladikūli" (முள்ளடிக்கூலி). In some cases the overtures are made by village headmen, and generally by some respectable villager. The law's delays, vexation in attendance at magistrates' courts, the difficulties of detection, and above all the uncertainty of the issue of the case combine to offer strong inducements to the ignorant rustic who has been relieved of his property to accept cheerfully this practice of "black mail."



These “thieving” Pariahs have their receivers and patrons in many large centres of the South Arcot, Trichinopoly and Salem districts among the Reddy and Malamar castes, and are frequently employed by them for the purpose of wreaking vengeance on their enemies.

They assume disguises when on their predatory excursions, dressing like caste Hindus, and occasionally as Brahmins: they gain admission to caste chuttrums, eating-houses and the like, and pass themselves off as traders in cattle. As sheep and cattle stealers, they are notorious.

Burglary is usually committed in the following ways:—

(a) By widening the space between the wall and the eaves of the roof (வால்வாய்).

(b) By making a hole near the bolt of the door sufficiently large to admit of a man's arm being introduced (The “buglee” operation).

(c) By making a hole *under* the door frame and passing in a youth of diminutive size. This is their favourite method.

The implement used by them is called the “arasu kuchi;” it is somewhat similar to a plough-share, about 18 inches long. Usually about 6 men engage in these undertakings: as soon as entrance is effected, a free means of exit is made, and two of the men enter, their comrades remaining concealed outside to receive the spoil—brass pots, cloths, boxes suspected of containing property and the like; these are speedily passed out to the confederates, and occasionally jewels worn by sleeping women

and children are removed: this is, however, only attempted when the thief is considered proficient.

Should one of these Pariahs get into trouble, the "Malamars" engage counsel for their defence and pay the necessary fees. The "Malamar" women take a prominent part in transactions regarding stolen property: they supply the Pariahs with the necessaries of life in advance and receive stolen property in return. It is said that close intimacy exists between the "Malamar" females and the Pariahs.

As among other criminal classes the "Vépúr" Pariahs observe omens and postpone their expeditions for a season should the omens be unfavourable.

Each family of Pariahs has its own special deity; the majority, however, are devoted followers of "Manjappa Swami."

Their priests are the Thatha-Pariahs, a class of Valluvas, who levy taxes, &c., on their followers and have the power of excommunication from caste.

The "kavilgar" system prevails among them: the headman of a family, whose experience entitles him to respect, is employed as kavilgar or watchman of the village and receives as remuneration 12 annas per mensem from each household, together with some grain. These kavilgars, or properly speaking "Kudi Kavilgars," are responsible that thefts are not committed in the village, or if such occur, for their detection; it is on the principle of "setting a thief to catch a thief." These elders are usually recognized as headmen and preside at punchayets, caste ceremonies and the like.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## GENERAL.

BESIDES the criminal classes already described, there are scattered over the various districts of the presidency others who are reputed to be of criminal habits: these have local appellations—some are nomads and others settled. In Coimbatore and Madura districts there are the Valiahs, who are a settled class possessing land: they are divided into three branches, viz.,

(a) Karumbara Valiah.

(b) Valoovaddy Valiah.

(c) Sarangoo Valiah.

The Sarangoo Valiahs are found chiefly in the Madura district. They are, as their name indicates, snarers of game, from “valei,” a net. They are chiefly addicted to burglary.

The Dundasis of Ganjam employed as village watchmen or “Kuttubadies.”

The Thathars and Thotiyars are nomadic tribes, found principally in the Madura district.

Information is wanting of the peculiar habits and customs of these tribes: they, however, do not take a prominent place among the criminals of the presidency, and when crime among them has become a necessity, they confine themselves entirely to the localities in which they have settled.

## APPENDIX I.

## FAKIR COINERS.

THE following account of Fakir Coiners is taken from Major Gunthorpe's *Notes on Criminal Tribes*; these people are frequently found throughout the presidency, and the valuable information afforded by Major Gunthorpe will be found useful to those who have to deal with these pests:—

“ This is a class of fakirs (Muhammadans) who are by profession manufacturers and utterers of counterfeit coin. They come from Goolburgha and its neighbourhood and the Sholapore district. Their ‘pir’ and preceptor lives at Satul Doodnee near Goolburgha. They wear beads round their necks, and their names invariably end with ‘Shah,’ thus ‘Unen Shah’ and ‘Kadur Shah,’ and their costume is the same as that of the ordinary fakir. Hindustani is spoken with a strong Canarese accent and in the usual fakir style. In addressing women ‘Mai’ (mother) and men ‘Data’ is uttered in a more than ordinarily cringing manner. The country is traversed by small gangs of from two to six, and boys, as a rule, accompany them. The Dekkan, the Central Provinces and Berar are the parts most frequented. Their homes are left in the beginning of the cold season, and the commencement of the monsoon generally sees them back. They put up at places usually frequented by fakirs, at saints’ tombs or in fakirs’ houses in the vicinity of towns or villages. The boys who accompany them are, as a rule, used for passing the false rupees. Women never accompany them. All their goods and chattels are carried by themselves. When questioned as to the class of fakirs to which they belong, the reply is to the Mudaree class. When arrested they exhibit no fear, but keep on protesting that they are poor mendicants.

“The mode adopted for passing the counterfeit coin is almost invariably the same: the victims selected are generally women. The fakir, or one of the boys, says he has a number of coppers and is willing to give 17 or 18 annas for the rupee, and that, being strangers to the part of the country, they do not know the correct change. The offer is accepted. The coppers are counted out and the rupee is asked for. Taking it in his hand the man dexterously changes it, substituting a counterfeit, and at once says the rupee is bad and he cannot take it; the victim, not suspecting anything, either offers another, which is also treated in the same way, and so on until no more genuine ones are remaining, and the fakir gathers up his change, or, in the first instance, takes up his coppers and passes on. One of these men has been known to pass no less than eleven counterfeit rupees into a tanda of Bungaras (Lumbádies) in one day. These coiners pass great quantities of false coins during their peregrinations. Large fairs are much resorted to for the purpose, and it is curious how rarely they are detected.

“The implements used for the manufacture of base coin are simple. A mould of earth, an iron spoon, a pair of pincers and a small knife constitute the lot. The mould is made of a kind of earth called by them ‘*Siddee Pait Muttee*.’ This is pounded very fine and worked to a proper consistency with water. A rupee is covered with this prepared earth and well pressed on all sides, and, to take the impression better, it is further tapped all round with a flat piece of wood. A cut is then made through it going along the edge of the rupee and a small hole made in the side of the mould, wedge shaped, to admit of the melted metal being poured in. A mark is also made across the cut mentioned above to admit of the mould being correctly fixed when ready. The lump of clay is now wrapped over with several layers of rag. A thick coating of clay is put

over this again and the whole lump is put in the fire. When the mould is considered sufficiently baked, the outer layer of clay and the rags are removed, the mould opened, and the rupee taken out, and it is complete. The two pieces are put together and melted substance poured in (this is generally pewter); the false rupee is taken out and perfected by the hand with the small knife, and is then ready for passing. The manufacture of false coin is carried on in lonely places, generally in jungle or waste lands. Counterfeit coin is carried in the lungotee worn by two or three of each gang (the passers). The pockets for holding the rupees to the inner side of the front part of the lungotee under the front flap and tied very tightly.

“On a man being searched, the lungotee is undone from the back and allowed to hang down in front, the inner part, being hidden by the front flap, escapes notice.

“These people always possess a leather bag, in which, on the march, they carry their coining implements, and in addition some of the fine earth, loose, and some white metal.

“When halted all the implements are buried in the neighbourhood of their resting-place. These fakirs may readily be recognized by their extremely cringing manner and by their Canarese accent.

“The only time all their implements are with them is when on a journey from place to place.”

## APPENDIX II.

## PROFESSIONAL POISONERS.

THE following interesting account of "Professional Poisoners" by Major Gunthorpe in his *Notes on Criminal Tribes* is reproduced as unhappily cases of professional poisoning are known to occur in this presidency, and the information afforded by Major Gunthorpe is likely to prove of great use to officers in dealing with this diabolical crime :—

"A class of crime has sprung up in recent years, which is becoming very prevalent. Professional poisoners, who practise their diabolical calling of drugging or poisoning travellers and then robbing them, have been known to exist in India for ages past, and still do exist, though happily to a much less degree; but the poisoning of cartmen for the sake of the cart and bullocks is a crime of recent growth. This class of poisoning is committed by both Hindoos and Muhammadans, and is followed as a profession by those who have taken to it, though it is a matter for congratulation that, as far as at present is known, they are not of any organization. Seemingly afraid to impart the secret to any accomplice, they almost invariably go about singly and carry on their demoniacal pursuits alone; in very exceptional cases two or even three have been known to have been associated together for the purpose.

"Lest they might be discovered, they never remain long in one part of the country, but are continually on the move. After committing three or four murders in, say, a radius of one hundred miles, they decamp and betake themselves to fresh fields many miles off, and do not revisit the original part till an interval of some years has passed, and cart

owners and drivers have forgotten the fate that befell some of their brethren, and been lulled into a sense of security.

“The poison employed is ‘arsenic’ and sometimes ‘datura.’ After disposing of the driver, the cart and bullocks are taken to some distant market and sold by the aid of unsuspecting commission agents for the sake of a small commission. So cunning are these poisoners that they will rarely venture themselves into the market. The system on which these professionals work is such as never to arouse suspicion in the minds of the unsuspicious cart owners and drivers, the incident adopted being of every day occurrence in the country.

“The poisoner, dressed in good clothes and passing himself off as a merchant travelling with the object of purchasing grain or cotton, arrives a stranger in a village or town and puts up in a Serai. Representing that he has some heavy business transactions to carry on in some distant grain or cotton market, and that he is desirous of hiring cart and pair of bullocks to take him there: he is soon offered what he requires by willing hirers of vehicles. Having selected the best, a bargain is struck for conveyance the whole way, a small sum is paid down in advance, and an understanding arrived at that the balance shall be paid on arrival at the destination. The owner of the cart is asked to accompany the merchant, and in the event of his expressing his inability to do so, a very trustworthy driver is asked for. Thus it will be observed everything is done to lull suspicion. On the journey the driver and his fare become very friendly, and should caste prejudices not interfere, they feed together; if this cannot be, the seemingly kind merchant occasionally gives his unsuspecting victim sweetmeats. This familiarity between driver and fare is a common occurrence in India.

“A suitable distance from the driver’s house being attained, an opportunity is seized to administer poison in either food or sweetmeats.



“ On symptoms of the poison taking effect appearing, the poor fellow, with many expressions of commiseration at being taken so suddenly ill, is helped into the cart and asked to lie down, and is carried on, the poisoner driving the cart himself. On reaching a lonely spot the victim, if by this time dead, is dragged out by means of a piece of cord from the cart fastened round the neck, and the body is cast on the road side or into an adjoining field. If the action of the poison has been slower than desired, another dose in water is administered as medicine, the poor wretch, half dead, never suspecting foul play at the hands of his kind (?) friend, or if this is not done, he is either strangled forthwith by means of a piece of cord, or he is dragged out and his brain dashed out with the nearest stones. This last course is, however, rarely resorted to. When the victim has died outright from the effects of poison, or has been strangled, some of these poisoners get rid of the corpse at once ; others, again, carry it about covered by a sheet or dhotee as if the man were asleep, keeping clear of villages (the more bold, not even being so cautious) until decomposition begins to set in, when it is disposed of as already stated. The reason assigned for keeping the body is that, once decomposition sets in, it goes on so rapidly, that there is no chance, by the time the body is discovered, of its being kept for recognition. In some instances cloths are left on the corpse, and in others, to avoid identification, they are burnt, and not a single article, either of clothing or jewellery is left on the body by which it can be recognized.

“ Another mode of disposing of the corpse, and considered by some of these demons the safest, is to lay it out under a tree by the roadside at night in a sleeping attitude with all clothes on and covered with a sheet or dhotee, to make believe some stranger (a wayfarer), had lain down and died from fatigue or disease. Bodies thus found do not excite suspicion in the minds of the village authorities, as

they are found in a natural position. A report is made accordingly to the police, who also agree; the members of the inquest also think it is nothing unusual: a verdict of 'died from natural causes' is recorded, and the body is duly buried. Murders are seldom committed in the same district in which the cart and bullocks have been hired. Not many years ago a notorious poisoner of this stamp was captured by accident, who confessed to no less than eighteen deaths by his own hands, and gloated over the recounting of each case. This miscreant was a Muhammadan and carried the poison in a silver charm tied on to his arm."

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# INDEX.

## ADA

ADAVI, Yanâdies, 21.  
 Agatâ, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Ahambadayars, 85, 114—116.  
 Ahobilam Mutt, The —, 3.  
 Ahobilam, Temple priest, 13.  
 Ajmaira, sub division of Lumbâdi caste, 29.  
 Alagar, or Alagiriswami, head of the Alagar temple in Madura, 84.  
 Alagar Swami, deity of the Maravars, 115.  
 Alaguries, 1—13.  
 Aliya Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 122.  
 Ambalacar, head of a Kallar clan, 88, 94.  
 Ambalakaran, agnomen of a class of Kallars, 82.  
 Ambu Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 121.  
 Ammei Pareiyan, *see* Eiya Pareiyan.  
 Amurthavadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Anjelmunal, household goddess of Thogamalai Koravars, 68.  
 Ankamma, deity worshipped by Yanâdies, 26.  
 Apanûr-Nâttu, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Arasu kuchi, implement used for house-breaking, 128.  
 Aray Domaras, 70, 72.  
 Arippu Karan, class of Pariahs, 124.  
 Aruttu Kattattha Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 123.  
 BADHAS, sub-division of Lumbâdi caste, 29.  
 Bailu Wudders, sub-division of Wudders, 78.  
 Balijas, educated Koravars, 48.  
 Bânâjâries, another name for Lumbâdies, 28.  
 Bandy, clan of Koravars, 48, 49.  
 Battarâjas or Battu Turâkas, 11.  
 Battu Turâkas, *see* Batturâjas.

## CHU

Berenhs of Central India, 70.  
 Bhampas of Poona, 3.  
 Bhât, Lumbâdi bard or priest, 36.  
 Bhoda, sub-division of Lumbâdi caste, 29.  
 Blutyas, a clan of Lumbâdies, 29, 30.  
 Bintharadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Bishakolu gudisay, Koravar tent, 50.  
 Baja, sub-division of Wudders, 78, 81.  
 Bowries (Budducks), a criminal class in Central India, 10.  
 Boya caste, 8.  
 Brinjaris, another name for Lumbâdies, 28.  
 Budducks, *see* Bowries.  
 Buglee operation, The —, a mode of committing house-breaking, 9, 128.  
 Burglary, 9, 15, 23, 33, 46, 51, 55, 65, 73, 79, 80, 115, 127, 128, 130.  
 CAPEMARI ALAGIRI OR CAPEMARIES, 1—7, 9—11, 13, 67, 68.  
 Cattle lifting, 23, 33, 35, 65, 74, 89, 115, 128.  
 Chaitanya, founder of Satani or mixed class, 2.  
 Challa or Garappa or Chatla Yanâdies, 21, 22.  
 Chatla Yanâdies, 21, 22.  
 Charan, division of Lumbâdi caste, 28, 29.  
 Cheed, beads worn by Lumbâdi women, 31.  
 Cherukuruvadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Chetti of a Capemari gang, 7.  
 Chinna Kuppaiiah Chetti, present head of the Capemaries, 3.  
 Chola, bodice worn by women of certain classes, 31, 61, 93.  
 Chriarapuvadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Chula, a musical instrument containing an implement for house-breaking, 9.

## COL

- Coiners, fakir, 131.  
 Coin, mode of manufacturing base —, 132.  
 Coins, counterfeiting, 7, 13.
- DACOITS, account of a notorious gang of Lumbádi, 37—45.  
 Dacoity, 15, 23, 33, 35, 46, 53, 65, 73, 89, 115, 127.  
 Dasaries, *see* Donga Dasari Alagiri; Golla Dasaries; Gudu Dasari Alagiri.  
 Dasirapuvadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Dasirapuvadu, women, 19.  
 Dasis, 21.  
 Dass, commonly added to names of Dasaries, 10.  
 Dhara, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Dhéd, Maharati for Pariah tribes, 117.  
 Doddaranis, 12.  
 Dom, term for out-caste races in Northern India, 70.  
 Domaras (Dombari—Domber), 70, 77, 78.  
 Dombari or Domber, *see* Domaras.  
 Domras of Bengal, 70.  
 Donga Dasari Alagiri, 2, 8—13.  
 Donga Wuddiwaras, thieving Wudders, 79.  
 Donku, slang for a hole, 68.  
 Dundasies of Ganjam, 130.  
 Duncháli, Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 121.  
 Durga, or Dargamme, deity invoked by Lumbádi criminal gangs, 33.  
 Durgamma Pujari, Lumbádi priest, 34, 36.
- EGALS, class of Pariahs, 122.  
 Eiya and Ammei Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 124.  
 Ena or Thogamalai, Koravars, 2, 48, 67.  
 Enthu, Kuruvadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Erukakas, 23, 30, 72, 74, 79. [*See* also Koravars.
- FAKIR COINERS, *see* Coiners.
- GADIS, sticks, 35.  
 Gádi-kól, house-breaking, implement, 9, 56.

## HUT

- Gangamah, goddess, offering made to — by Donga (Gudu) Dasaries, 13.  
 Gala, pad worn on the head by Lumbádi women, 32.  
 Galib Shah, coiner, 7.  
 Gandkatties, sickles, 35, 41.  
 Garadastamban, symbol of religious life, 9.  
 Garappa Yanadies, 21, 22.  
 Genealogical tree, showing origin of Lumbádi gotrams, 28, 29.  
 Genealogy of the Setupatis of Ramnad, 98.  
 Ghootgal sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Gôhurs, another name for Lumbádics, 28.  
 Golla caste, 8.  
 Golla Chetti, head of the Capemari Alagaries, 3.  
 Golla Dasaries, 8.  
 Gollarivadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Gotrein, house-breaking implement, 68.  
 Grain-stealing, 19, 33.  
 Gudisays, Domara—or huts, 72.  
 Gudisays, Joghi—or huts, 16.  
 Gudisays, Koravars—or huts, 50.  
 Gudu Dasari Alagaries, 2, 8—13, 56.  
 Gudu, headman of Dasari gang, 8, 13.  
 Guguris, head ornament of Lumbádi women, 32.  
 Gundavadu, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Gunja Raja, headman of a Wudder community, 81.  
 Guruppa, deity of the margosa tree, worshipped by Domaras, 77.  
 Guzera, embroidered silk worn on the wrist by Lumbádi women, 31.
- HALA, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Hasali, necklace worn by Lumbádi women, 31.  
 Headman, Village —, protecting criminal gangs, 16, 19, 34, 54.  
 Highway robbery, 15, 18, 23, 46, 79, 89.  
 Holia, Canarese for Pariah tribes, 117.  
 House-breaking, 9, 55, 67, 89.  
 Huts, Yanadi, 24. [*See* also Gudisays.]

## JAL

JALLIVADU, a Joghi sect, 14.  
 Jangam, headman of Joghi gang, 16, 17, 18.  
 Jangam Poojali, headman of the Joghi caste, 16.  
 Jathi Pillai, Koravars, 48.  
 Joghies, 14, 20.  
 Joochi, cloth round the loins by Koravars, 61.  
 KALLA ALAGAR, god of thieves, 1, 13.  
 Kalla-Bantru Koravars, 50, 51.  
 Kallan, thief or robber, 82.  
 Kallars, 58, 82—94, 114.  
 Kallu Wudders, 78.  
 Kamalama, favorite deity with Yanadies, 26.  
 Kamawa caste, 21.  
 Kania, ear ornament of Lumbádi women, 32.  
 Kanjathadi Karupu, demon worshipped by Ena Koravars, 68.  
 Kankanan, or talisman, 25.  
 Kapun, a police constable, 68.  
 Kapu, Capemari term for a policeman, 6.  
 Kapús, 30.  
 Karai, horse-hair tied round the necks of married Kallar women, 94.  
 Karumba Valiahs, 130.  
 Karuvaipillai Koravars, 47, 49, 51, 57.  
 Kasas, 21.  
 Kathirivandlu, scissor thieves, 8.  
 Kativi, favorite deity with Yanadies, 26.  
 Kavadi, clan of Koravars, 48, 49, 64.  
 Kavilgar Koravars, 64.  
 Kavilgars of the Tinnevely District, 112.  
 Kavilgars or watchmen, Yanadi, 22, 24.  
 Kavulkara Koravars, 47, 57, 58.  
 Kavi, system in the Tinnevely district, 112.  
 Kethaikal, clubs, 84.  
 Kil Náddé, division of Kallars, 82, 85.  
 Kolas, sub-division of a clan of Lumbádies, 29.  
 Kolas, another name for Erukakas, 47.  
 Kolaties of Central India, 70.  
 Koliva Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 122.

## MAI

Kondayan-kottei, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Koniai, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Koodaykutti Koravars, 47, 49.  
 Koonjil Koravars, 47.  
 Koorshevanloo, another name for Erukakas, 46.  
 Korachas (Korchavandlu) *see* Koravars.  
 Koravars or Korachas (Korchavandlu), or Erukakas (Yerukalavandlu), 2, 46—69, 72, 74, 79.  
 Kottaga Karan, class of Pariahs, 124.  
 Kottri-pattu Ahambadiyars, 116.  
 Kuchi or gádi-kól, house-breaking implement, 9.  
 Kudaykutti Koravars, 69.  
 Kudi Kaval, 'black mail,' 58.  
 Kudi-kavilgars of the Tinnevely district, 112.  
 Kudi-kavilgars, Pariah, 129.  
 Kudi Pillei, class of Pariahs, 123.  
 Kulla Alagar, deity worshipped by Kallars, 90.  
 Kullavadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Kulvas, The —, 17.  
 Kurichi-kattu, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Kurra, another name for Erukakas, 46.  
 Kurumbas, 96.  
 Kurumtoths, sub-division of a clan of Lumbádies, 29.  
 Kuttubadies, village watchmen, 130.  
 Kykaroos of Deccan and Central Provinces, 47.  
 LUBHANS, a caste allied to the Lumbádies, 32.  
 Lainga or gown of Lumbádi women, 31.  
 Lakha, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Lumbádies, Sugalies, 28—45, 70, 72.  
 Lumbhanas, a caste allied to the Lumbádies, 32.  
 Lana, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Landa, language of Lumbádies, 30.  
 MADIGAS (Chucklers) 13, 36, 72.  
 Magiday, musical instrument played by Joghi women, 18.  
 Mahratta Domaras, 70, 72.  
 Maigavuth, sub-division of a clan of Lumbádies, 29.

## MAL

Maira, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Malamars, receivers of stolen property, 128; engage counsel to defend Pariah burglars, 129.  
 Malas, Telugu for Pariahs, 13, 36, 72, 117.  
 Malei Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 125.  
 Manebady, clan of Koravars, 48, 49.  
 Mangapottoo Chetties, receivers of stolen property, 90.  
 Manjappaswami, deity worshipped by Pariah, 129.  
 Mannu Wudders, 78.  
 Manrikutti, clan of Koravars, 48, 49.  
 Mannal-kádei-tinnum Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 123.  
 Marai, tax levied on villages by headmen, 64.  
 Marasu Pareiyan, class of Pariahs 121.  
 Maravars, 58, 82, 85, 95-116.  
 Mariammal, deity worshipped by Domaras, 77.  
 Mâl Nâddá, division of Kallars, 82, 85.  
 Morasa (from Murasu = drum), Telugu dialect spoken by Kavalgar Koravars, 64.  
 Mucheri Kalas, another name for Alagiries, 8.  
 Muhammadan coiners, *see* Coiners.  
 Mukaram, nose ornament worn by Lumbádi women, 32.  
 Málladikúli, 'black mail' for restoration of stolen property, 127.  
 Mupuniyadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Murasu, *see* Morasu.  
 Mutli Gúrú, head of the Domara caste, 71, 73, 74, 76.  
 NAGAMANJA, favorite deity with Yanadies, 26.  
 Nagara, drum played by Lumbádies, 28, 37.  
 Nagelu, coremony performed at a Domara marriage, 76.  
 Naidoos, name assumed by educated Koravars, 48.  
 Naik, headman of a gang, clan, 30, 33, 35, 36-45, 52, 55, 56, 59, 62.  
 Nakkala Vandlu, class of Yanadies, 23.  
 Nalagoo, a marriage ceremony of Joghies, 17.

## PUD

Natankar, headman of a Thogamalai Koravar gang, 68.  
 Natookotai Chetties, receivers of stolen property, 68, 90, 115.  
 Navaratri festival at Ramnad, 102.  
 Nagasaram, musical instrument played by Joghi women, 18.  
 ODDAN, *see* Wudders.  
 Omens, Principal — of criminal classes, 34, 53, 90.  
 Ordoul, Trial by —, 36, 59.  
 Orûr (Oroiyr)—Nattu, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Ottaga Karan, class of Pariahs, 124.  
 PACHALA, anklet worn by Lumbádi women, 31.  
 Padiyachi Alagiri, 1, 2, 13.  
 Palanis, Pariahs on the —, 125.  
 Pallans, low agricultural class, 119.  
 Panta Reddies, 21.  
 Pariahs or Pareiyan tribes, 117, 129. [*See also* Malas.]  
 Pár knchi, implement for house-breaking, 80.  
 Pedda Kuppuiah, brother of the head of the Capemaries, 3.  
 Pelcankushal, musical instrument played by Joghi women, 18.  
 Peranavadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Pereiyan tribes, *see* Pariahs.  
 Perumal, household god of Joghies, 17, 18, 49, 52, 53, 55, 56, 62.  
 Perum Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 122.  
 Phúlia, embroidered cloth for the 'gala' or pad worn on the head by Lumbádi women, 32.  
 Pichagoontas, The —, 17.  
 Pick-pockets, 3.  
 Pile-curing Koravars, 48, 60.  
 Poisoners, professional, 134.  
 Pola Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 123.  
 Palariammal, deity invoked by Domaras, 73, 75, 77.  
 Poleiyans on the Palanis, 125.  
 Poleamma, village goddess of agriculture, 26.  
 Poleagarans, another name for Thogamalai Koravars, 67.  
 Poliar, Malayalam for Pariah tribes, 117.  
 Poonay Koothee Koravars, 47.  
 Pudukota State, 86.

## PUN

Punhar, a division of the Lumbádi caste, 28, 29.  
 Purification after imprisonment, 18.  
 Putchay Koothee Koravars, 47, 49, 67.  
 Puralavadu, Joghi sect, 14.

RAILWAY THIEVES, 4.  
 Raja-básha Ahambadiyars, 116.  
 Raja of Pudukota, 86.  
 Rajputs of North India, 95.  
 Razú caste, 21.  
 Receivers of stolen property, 7, 15, 19, 23, 34, 68, 74, 81, 90, 115, 128.  
 Reddies, 21.  
 Reddi Domaras, 70, 72.  
 Reddi Yanadies, 21.  
 Robbery, 15, 73, 115. [*See also Highway Robbery.*]  
 Rudrakshmalas, 12.  
 Rutharwakkal, bill-hooks, 84.

SALIA CASTE 8.  
 Saligranes, 12.  
 Saliya Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 125.  
 Samacalun, symbol of religious life, 9.  
 Sandhia Panchapa Warus, 12.  
 Sanku Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 124.  
 Sappidivadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Sarangoo Valiahs, 130.  
 Satáni or mixed class, 2, 14, 49.  
 Sathupadi, clan of Koravars, 48, 49.  
 Sembá-Náttu, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Seruvasal Kallars, 87.  
 Servaigarans, another name for Thogamalai Koravars, 67.  
 Setupati of Ramnad, head of the Maravar tribe, 96.  
 Setupatis of Ramnad, History of the —, 96—111.  
 Setupatis of Ramnad, Genealogy of the —, 98.  
 Siddee Pait Muttee, earth used for the mould for manufacturing base coin, 132.  
 Sikkaloo kól, the Yanadi jemmy, 27.  
 Silloo kolú, instrument for house-breaking, 56.  
 Sivaralavadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Slaves, Pariah—in former times, 118.  
 Solagu Kutti Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 124.

## VAC

Solia Pallans, another name for Thogamalai Koravars, 67.  
 Soonariahs of Bundlekund, 3.  
 Subangal, spears, 84.  
 Sugalies, *see* Lumbádies.  
 Svatantram fees of kavilgars (watch men), 112.

TALIYARIES OF THE TINNEVELLY DISTRICT, 112.  
 Tamila Pareiyan, class of Pariahs 123.  
 Tangalána or Tonda Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 121.  
 Tappai, symbol of religious life, 9.  
 Tavalei-tinnun Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 123.  
 Thaira, sub-division of Lumbádi caste, 29.  
 Than-arasu Nádu, independent territory acquired by Kallars, 84.  
 Thapigadu, slang for a receiver, 68.  
 Tharavadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Thatha Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 120, 129.  
 Thathars, nomadic tribes in Madura, 130.  
 Théva, agnomen of certain castes, 85.  
 Thirnttu or thieving Pariahs, 126.  
 Thogamalai Koravar, 2, 13, 48. [*See also Eua or Thogamalai Koravars.*]  
 Thotiyars, 130.  
 Thubhai Koravars, 47, 57.  
 Tiru Valluvan, famous Pariah poet 120.  
 Tiya Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 121.  
 Tola Bottu, plate containing rice used at a Domara wedding, 75.  
 Tonda Pareiyan, *see* Tangalána Pareiyan.  
 Totti Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 124.  
 Tulasimalas, 12.  
 Tuppu kúli or clue hire, black mail levied by Kallars, 90.  
 Turpu Yanadies, 23.

UPPAREIYAN, class of Pariahs, 125.  
 Uppu Koravars, 47, 49, 51, 57.  
 Uppu-Kottei, clan of Maravars, 95.  
 Uraguntivadu, Joghi sect, 14.

VACAPADI, house-breaking implement, 68.



## VAD

- Vadaga Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 121.  
 Vadapillavadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Vádáthyá, or Northern division of Lumbádies, 29.  
 Vadi Sanchi, bag worn by Cape-marines and Koravars, 4, 61.  
 Vakitavadu, Joghi sect, 14.  
 Valei Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 122.  
 Valiahs, 130.  
 Valoovaddy Valiahs, 130.  
 Valluva Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 120.  
 Veenganattu Kallars, 87.  
 Velama caste, 21.  
 Vellari Thadies, clubs, 83, 89, 92.  
 Venkatêswara, deity consulted by Koravars, 62.

## ZAN

- Vêpúr Pariahs, 117, 125.  
 Vettiyan Pareiyan, class of Pariahs, 122.  
 WODDERANDU, *see* Wudders.  
 Wooyaloo, clan of Koravars, 48, 49.  
 Wudders (Woddevandlu = Oddan), 8, 30, 72, 78—81.  
 YANADIÊS, 21—~~27~~30.  
 Yattinavaru, sub-division of Wudders, 78.  
 Yellammal, deity worshipped by Wudders, 78.  
 Yerukuluvandlu, *see* Koravars.  
 Yogin (Sanskrit), a magician, 14.  
 ZANDHYAM OR SACRED THREAD, 25.





**Bound by**

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**Date 27 FEB 1959**